

1584

NATHAN THE WISE.

A

PHILOSOPHICAL DRAMA.

From the GERMAN of

G. E. LESSING, ^K

Late Librarian to the Duke of BRUNSWICK,

Translated into ENGLISH by

R. E. RASPE.

L O N D O N :

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M D C C L X X X I.

[Price ONE SHILLING AND SIX-PENCE.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

NATHAN, an opulent Jew Merchant.

RECHA, his supposed Daughter.

DAYA, a Christian Lady, her Governess.

A KNIGHT TEMPLAR, Prisoner of War.

SALADIN, Sultan.

SITTAH, his Sister.

AL-HAFI, a Dervis.

EMIR MANSOR, Leader of a Caravan.

Three Renegadoes.

PATRIARCH of Jerusalem.

Priests, Canons, Monks, and his Retinue, as described

Act IV. Scene II.

A LAY-BROTHER, or common Friar.

Some Slaves.

The SCENE is at Jerusalem.

P R E F A C E.

THE Author of this Drama stands very high in the opinion of his countrymen, because he stands foremost amongst those late reformers, to whom Germany, in its widest extent, is beholden for its present golden age of literature.

The revolution, which brought it on, took place in the northern parts of that vast empire, within these last forty years, when the philosophic spirit of *Kepler*, *Leibnitz*, and *Wolf*, had universally spread, and begun to digest the crude learning of former ages into common sense, and to prepare the minds of men for good taste.

This fortunate circumstance accounts for the sudden polish which the German language received. It accounts likewise for those many generous and successful patriotic efforts of private men of genius, who arose at once in defence and support of their national literature, which had been shamefully oppressed by Frenchified courts, and more shamefully neglected in pedantic schools.

That this philosophic spirit must appear in their works, needs no comment. Their excellence, brilliancy, spirit, and tendency, cannot be ascribed to any other cause; and many of them will go to after-times, not as admirable monsters of wild and uncultivated ingenuity, but as chaste and correct master-pieces of well-bred genius and noble simplicity, for which the ancients have been so justly admired.

Mr. *Lessing* distinguished himself in different branches of literature. He began his literary career with witty trifles and epigrams, and finished it with this philosophic Drama, which was not written for the stage, but was intended as an antidote against that rancour of religious bigotry, with
which

P R E F A C E.

which the Jews are still treated in many parts of Germany.

The truly philosophic candour which breathes through the whole composition, and has dared to do justice to infidels, friars, and patriarchs, has been deemed a characteristic of this nation; and though the unnatural and abominable character of Shylock continues to fan the expiring flame of inquisitorial bigotry, and universal toleration is far from being fully established, it is hoped, however, that Nathan will be suffered to counteract the poison which barbarous ages have left in the minds of fanatics, and Shakespeare and political factions may, some time or other, stir up again and put into fermentation.

A candid perusal of this singular Drama, will leave on the mind of the reader, not only a pleasing conviction that honour and virtue are independent of religious tenets, but likewise a very lively sense of the Author's uncommon abilities as a dramatic writer. In that line he will never be forgot in his own country, for he has left some other excellent plays, which are approved by good judges in the closet, whilst they constitute the delight and entertainment of all the theatres in Germany.

He died last year, universally regretted, as a most amiable character, and as an ornament of the nation. A kind of musical drama to his memory was performed on the stage at Berlin, with one of his most popular plays. The playhouse was hung with black. The audience appeared in mourning; and the profits of the night were appropriated towards the expences of a monument.

LONDON,
June 13, 1781.

NATHAN

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NATHAN THE WISE.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

[*The Hall in the House of NATHAN.*]

NATHAN *returning from a Journey.* DAYA *meets him.*

DAYA.

TIS him!—Thank God! at last our eyes behold him again.

Nathan. Yes Daya! 'tis myself—thank God!—But why at *last*? Did I propose to return sooner? It was not in my power: Allowing for the necessity of often going out of the road, 'tis at least a journey of two hundred leagues from hence to Babylon; nor is the waiting for payment a circumstance favourable to expedition in business.

Daya. A great misfortune had nearly befallen you in your absence.—Your house—

Nathan. Burnt down. So I was told.—Would to God it were no more.

B

Daya.

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Daya. In all probability it might have been burnt to the very ground.

Nathan. Then, *Daya*, we might have built a new one, and more commodious too.

Daya. True!—But *Recha* had a narrow escape from being lost in the flames.

Nathan. Lost?—in the flames? That I was not told.—Well!—*Then* there would have been no more occasion for any house.—A narrow escape! I fear she is no more! Out with it! Out!—Do not torture me longer.—Yes, she is lost.

Daya. If she was—could I have been the messenger?

Nathan. Why then do you terrify me thus? O *Recha*! my dear *Recha*!

Daya. Your *Recha*? your dear *Recha*?

Nathan. If I ever should be unfortunate enough no more to call her *my own* child!

Daya. Have you no better claim to your other property, than what you have to her?

Nathan. No greater—nor indeed a better claim! My fortune is the gift of nature and of accident: For this dearest jewel I am indebted to virtue alone.

Daya. *Nathan*! *Nathan*! your goodness costs me dear—if such intentions deserve the name.

Nathan. Such intentions? what intentions?

Daya. My conscience——

Nathan. Let me tell you first——

Daya. My conscience, I say——

Nathan. ——What fine silks I bought for you at *Babylon*.——So rich——so highly beautiful!

Daya. To no purpose——for I must tell you I cannot over-awe my conscience any longer.

Nathan. ——And the buckles——the ear-rings——the bracelets——the ring and chain——I bought for you at *Damascus*——I long indeed to see how they will please you.

Daya. There's the man! happy in giving presents!

Nathan. Take them with the same pleasure I give them——and be silent.

Daya. And be silent!——no body doubts your probity——your honour and your generosity——Yet——

Nathan.

Nathan. Yet I am but a Jew—that you meant to say? Eh?

Daya. You know better.

Nathan. Well then! be silent.

Daya. I shall. But if Almighty wisdom should look upon as reprehensible what I can neither alter nor prevent—let his judgment fall upon you.

Nathan. Be it upon me! Amen!—But where is she? Did you tell me falsely? Does she know of my return?

Daya. The same question I might ask you. Terror and fear are still trembling in every one of her nerves. Her fancy is still in flames. Sleeping she wakes; and waking her mind seems asleep.—Now less than a woman, now more than an angel.

Nathan. Poor child!

Daya. This very morning she lay, her eyes shut, the fairest image of death. Of a sudden she started, exclaiming, “Hark! Hark! my father’s camels coming! Hark! the sweetness of his voice!” She closed her eyes again; and her head, no more supported by her sleeping arm, dropt on the pillow.—I hastened to the door, and behold it was yourself! No wonder! Her thoughts have been ever upon you—and about him.

Nathan. About whom?

Daya. About him, who rescued her from the flames.

Nathan. Who was he? who? where is he who saved my Recha, pray?

Daya. A young knight templar, who some days before was brought in as prisoner of war, and to whom Saladin had granted his life.

Nathan. What? A knight templar, to whom Saladin granted his life? Could a less wonder have saved Recha?

Daya. Had not he bravely ventured his life, so unexpectedly granted, she must have perished.

Nathan. Where is that generous man? Lead me on to embrace his feet. I hope you gave him what treasure I left with you?—gave it all? and promised more?

Daya. How could we?

Nathan. You could not?

Daya. He came, no body knows whence; he went,

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no body knows whither.——Without any knowledge of the house, led only by the shrieks, he spread his mantle before him, and darted through smoke and flame towards the voice, which cried for assistance. We thought him lost, when lo! he, bursting from the fire, stood before us again, high carrying her on his sinewy arms. Cold and unaffected at our loudest thanks, he put her down, pressed through the crowd, and——disappeared.

Nathan. Not for ever, I hope.

Daya. Some days after we beheld him walking under the palm-trees, which there below surround the Saviour's tomb. I approached him with awe and with respect. I thanked him, praised him, desired him and conjured him, once more to see the pious creature, unhappy till he would allow her to vent her thanks profusely before him.

Nathan. And?

Daya. In vain! Deaf to our prayer, he upbraided me so bitterly——

Nathan. And that deterred you?——

Daya. No! no! Every day I followed him——prayed every day the same——was every day refused.——I suffered much, would have suffered more.——But for many days past he has not resorted to the palm-grove at the Saviour's tomb. No body knows what is become of him. You stare? you meditate?

Nathan. Only to consider how that must operate on tender Recha's mind.——Slighted by him she is bound to revere——repulsed and yet attracted.——In truth, it must set head and heart at variance, whether mankind or life is to be hated most. Neither may prevail, and fancy mingling in the contest, may disorder her mind to madness, in which of course the head will act as heart, and that presume to reason.——Sad! sad alternative!——Too well I know her. 'Tis Recha's case, I ween——She raves——

Daya. ——But ever pious——lovely ever!

Nathan. ——Yet raves——

Daya. One whim she indulges more than others——that her knight is no mortal man——nor under mortal sway——but the guardian angel, to whose care she from her

her infancy, has been entrusted; who, even in the flames, hovered about her, and, bursting at last from his surrounding cloud, condescended suddenly to appear to her in the form of a knight templar.—Do not laugh. Who knows? At least indulge that harmless notion, in which the Jews, the Christians, and the Musselman's agree—It is so soothing and so sweet!

Nathan. And so it is to me!—Go honest Daya! Go! See how she does—whether I may see her now.—Then I shall look about me for that savage guardian angel; and if he should be pleased still to move amongst us in the pursuits of unmannerly knighthood, I am sure to make him out—to bring him then along.

Daya. Hard is the task.

Nathan. If sweet conceit then yields to sweeter truth, you will, I trust, believe me, that the human heart feels more for men than angels.—You will not scold me then, nor put to my account, that she, our dearest little fool, be rid of such angelic visions.

Daya. You are an odd compound of good and bad. I go! hark! but see herself.

S C E N E II.

RECHA and the same.

RECHA.

YOURSELF, my dearest father? I thought it was your voice, sweet message of your coming. Where are you? What detains you? What rocks, what deserts, and what rivers keep you from us still? You breathe our air, and scarce a wall divides us. Why don't you fly to your Recha's arms? Poor Recha, burnt to death!—almost perishing in flames! Near perishing—no more. Do not shudder! 'Tis horrid, sure, to die in flames.

Nathan. My dearest, dearest child!

Recha. You had so many rivers in your way—there was the Euphrates to pass—then Tigris, Jordan,
and

and many more. Full often trembled I for you, before the horrid flames drew on so nigh! For since they drew so nigh, I ween to die in water is comfort, and refreshment.—But you're not drowned, and I not burnt to death—Joy be to us! and thanks to God! 'Twas he who, on the wings of his unseen angelic host, carried you safe, and your barge, over the faithless floods. 'Twas he who beckoned to my angel, to carry me unhurt on his white wings, through all these flames.

Nathan (apart.)—White wings! indeed! the knight's mantle spread before him.

Recha. —Ordered him, in view of all, to carry me through the flames, and to part them with his wings. —Thus I have seen an angel face to face; my guardian angel.

Nathan. You well deserve it. More beauty did not strike you in his form, than he beheld in your's.

Recha (laughingly.) Whom do you flatter here? The angel, or yourself?

Nathan. Well! well! I grant he is an angel, and must be such for you, though really the man, to whom you owe your life, was but a common man.

Recha. No angel in that sense; no, no! 'Twas more than that. 'Twas a nobler nature! Have not you yourself instructed me, that such may be, and that our God may, now and then, exert himself in wonders, in favour of his loving children? I ever loved him.

Nathan. And he loves you—at every hour, nay from eternity, performing wonders for you, and those who resemble you.

Recha. A pleasing truth.

Nathan. Why? Because it seems to be the course of nature, that a knight templar should have saved your life, is it the less a matter of wonder? The greater wonder is, that true authentic wonders should become familiar to our understandings. Without this wonder, a thinking man could never have given the name of wonders to things which children call so—children, who stare and gape in the pursuit of what is new, of what is uncommon to them.

Daya (to Nathan.) You won't, I hope, with these subtleties, absolutely undo her overstrained brains?

Nathan.

Nathan. Let me do as I think proper. Would it not be wonderful enough to my Recha to have been saved by a man, who was to be saved first by no inconsiderable wonder? No inconsiderable wonder indeed? For who has ever heard before of any knights templar being saved by Saladin? or of any intreating him for pardon? or offering any other ransom than his belt and dagger?

Recha. But that concludes for me. — For those very reasons 'twas no knight templar — 'twas a knight templar's form. — If knight templars never come to Jerusalem but to certain death; if none are permitted freely to walk our streets; how came it to pass, that a knight templar should save me from the flames?

Nathan. Mark! how ingenious! Now, Daya, you take the word. I had it from you, that he was a prisoner sent to town. You know more of it, no doubt.

Daya. Well! So they say indeed; but they say at the same time, that Saladin pardoned him for his resemblance to one of his dearest brothers; but as it is past twenty years since this his brother's death — his name I know not what — his death I know not where — the whole sounds so — incredible — that very likely the whole is but a story.

Nathan. Ay! ay! Why incredible, Daya? Likely not, as now and then will happen, that something more incredible still may be more easily credited. Why may not Saladin in earlier days have loved a brother? He is affectionate to his relations. And is it strange then that there should be a resemblance in two different faces? And is an old sensation a lost one? Will not like objects produce similar effects? Or when has it been otherwise? Where is the incredibility? True, Daya, there's an end to your wonders — and *your wonders alone*, though they *want credibility*, yet you think *deserve* — belief.

Daya. You rail.

Nathan. Because you railed at me. — But even thus, Recha, your escape remains a wonder, to be performed by him alone, who delights in leading with imperceptible

perceptible strings the hardest counsels, and the wildest schemes of kings——no better than his play-things.

Recha. Dear father! if I should be wrong——you know it is not willingly.

Nathan. I know, you rather like to be informed. Mark then! a front arched thus or thus; a nose shaped in this form or in that; eye-brows on sharp or blunter bones, drawn streight or round; a line——a dimple——a mark——a mole——a nothing on a wild European's face:——and you escape from Asiatick flames! You who are so fond of wonders, is there no wonder in this?——Why would you have angels troubled with the care of you?

Daya. What harm after all——if I may be allowed to speak——to think one's self saved rather by angels than by men? Are not they a step nearer to the first incomprehensible Cause of one's safety?

Nathan. 'Tis pride! no more than pride! 'Tis the iron pot wanting to be lifted from the fire with silver tongs, that it may pass for a pot of plate.——Pshaw!——What harm? you ask, What harm?——What avails it? might I ask you in my turn.——Yourself to be a step nearer to God's omnipotence—is nonsense—blasphemy.——'Tis a dangerous——an obnoxious conceit. Indeed it is. Come!——be attentive——you——and you in particular (*to Recha.*) Would not you delight in making suitable and grateful returns to him who saved you——whether man or angel? You would. But what return, is it in your power to make to angels? You may thank them; pray to them; melt in their adorations; fast on their holy days, and give alms.——All to no purpose——For it seems to me, you and your neighbours prosper by that worship better than angels do. They do not fatten by your fastings; nor are they enriched by your alms. Their glory is not to be improved by your adorations, nor their power by your dependence. Answer me fairly! Are not men?

Daya. Indeed a man might have employed us better to do something for him. God knows how ready we were! But he would not accept of any thing, wanted absolutely nothing; was in himself as self-sufficient and content as any angel possibly could be.

Recha. And then—when he disappeared—

Nathan. Disappeared? how? when he was no more seen walking in the palm-grove?—Or have you since enquired after him?

Daya. Not properly.

Nathan. No, Daya—There you see the bad consequence of your error! You madcaps!—Hah! if this your angel should have happened to be taken ill?

Recha. Ill!

Daya. Ill? I hope not.

Recha. It chills my veins! Daya! here—your hand—
(*taking Daya's hand, and laying it on her front*). my head—lately how warm—now how cold?

Nathan. He is a Frank, unused to this climate; is young; not used to the hardships of a knight's life, to want and waking.

Recha. Ill! ill!

Daya. Nathan means only a possibility.

Nathan. There he lies! without a friend—without money to procure or pay them.

Recha. Ah! dear father!

Nathan. There he lies unattended, without advice, without a friendly visit—a prey to pain and death.

Recha. Where! ah, where?

Nathan. He, who for a person never seen before—no matter who she was—a fellow-creature—dared to rush into the flames—

Daya. Do pity her!

Nathan. Nor does he desire to see her any more—unless it was to save her a second time—enough to him she were a fellow-creature.—

Daya. Ah! cease—and see!

Nathan. Under the agonies of death he has no comfort but the consciousness of his generosity!

Daya. Cease! or you kill her.

Nathan. And you have killed him, might have killed him.—*Recha!* *Recha!* 'tis physic, 'tis no poison which I hold out to you. He lives!—recover!—may be he is not ill!

Recha. Sure?—not dead? nor ill?

Nathan. Sure not dead!—for God rewards the good we do in this world with worldly blessings.—Come,
C come!

come! since now you see, how much more easy it is piously and devoutly to doat, than rightly to act—how the weakest are often inclined to indulge and plume themselves with pious sentimental fancies, when they should have exerted themselves in pious doings.

Recha. Ah father! dearest father! leave not your Recha to herself and alone again!—Perhaps he may be gone a journey?

Nathan. True, he may.—But who's the Musselman yonder, staring at, and reviewing the load of my camels? Do you know him?

Daya. Ha! 'Tis your dervis.

Nathan. Who?

Daya. Your dervis; your chef's-fellow.

Nathan. Al-Hafi? Al-Hafi, he?

Daya. Of late the sultan's treasurer.

Nathan. How? Al-Hafi? You dream again. But sure 'tis him. Walk in! make haste!—What shall I hear?

[*Recha and Daya go off.*]

S C E N E III.

NATHAN and the DERVIS.

D E R V I S.

STARE on!—stare on!—the more the better!

Nathan. Is it you?—A dervis in such pomp?

Dervis. Why not? Is not a dervis fit for any thing?

Nathan. For many things he may be good enough.—Yet I was used to think a dervis—you understand me, a true one—would never condescend to be made any thing.

Dervis. I swear by Mahomet!—may be I am no true one. But if one must—

Nathan. Must! A dervis must? No body ought to be compelled, and should a dervis? But for what purpose?

Dervis. To do what he is desired, and he conceives right—that's our duty.

Nathan.

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Nathan. I protest you're right.—Come fellow! let me embrace thee!—still my friend?

Dervis. Without enquiring first what rank I hold?

Nathan. In spite of rank and place——

Dervis. Yet may I not be in a rank which should awe and give you trouble?

Nathan. Provided your heart be the same, I don't mind your rank—nor place—nor garments.

Dervis. —Yet they command respect—What think you? Guess what place I hold at court.

Nathan. That of a dervis; sure! no more.—Perhaps that of a cook (*sneering.*)

Dervis. And why not that of the cup-bearer too? Saladin knows me better.—His choice made me a treasurer.

Nathan. You?

Dervis. —of the privy purse—for that of his family is still under his father's care.

Nathan. His family is great.

Dervis. —and greater than you guess; for every beggar does belong to it.

Nathan. Yet Saladin cannot bear a beggar in his sight——

Dervis. —so little—true!—that he's absolutely bent on their destruction—even should it make himself a beggar.

Nathan. Bravo! 'Tis what I mean.

Dervis. —and what he has been long ago—and more than any one!—The sun can never set but sees his coffers empty. Whatever tide of wealth pours in at day-break, is gone by noon——

Nathan. —and lost in drains, which to fill up, or stop, would be a vain attempt.

Dervis. So it is!

Nathan. I know.

Dervis. Though a dismal sight, when kings, as birds of prey, with greediness devour the carcase of their people, 'tis ten times worse, when, carcase-like, they are a prey of greedy thousands.

Nathan. Not so, my friend! No! no!

Dervis. You don't know what it is!—How could you?

you? Come on. What do you bid for my place? 'Tis your's when you chuse.

Nathan. What is it worth to you? What's your income?

Dervis. But very little. To you it may produce a great deal more; for you may shut the flood-gates when it ebbs, and at low-water mark—too oft the case—advance upon what interest you please.

Nathan. —Charge interest on interest not paid?

Dervis. Ay! ay!

Nathan. —Till all my substance be a heap of interest? *[Shaking his head.]*

Dervis. Will not that do?—If not, let's part—be friends no more!—I had depended much on your assistance.

Nathan. How? Speak!

Dervis. Supposing that you would have no objection to be my active friend, and thus assist me to discharge the duty of my place with honour and credit to myself; and that of course, in case of need, I might have cash from you.—You shake your head?

Nathan. Well! well! Mark here a just distinction. Al-Hafi, you, my friend! be welcome to my cash as far as it will go.—The sultan's treasurer gets none.

Dervis. I guess'd it well: Your goodness to your prudence like—your prudence to your wisdom! patience! I shall without delay undo your fine distinctions.—Look there, the castan of my place, our sultan's gift. Before it fades, before it wears away to rags, such as a dervis suit, you will see it hanging on a peg here in this city, and I shall independant, free, and barefooted, roam far off on the holy banks of Ganges, and tread the burning Indian sands together with my masters.

Nathan. All in character.

Dervis. —And playing chess with them.——

Nathan. Your highest pleasure.

Dervis. Look only how I was besnared!—Was it meant, no more to beg? to play the rich with beggars? to indulge my whims? and when I chose, to change the richer beggar into a needy man of substance?

Nathan. I do not think so.

Dervis.

Dervis. It was something more absurd! The first time of my life I felt myself flattered by the sultan's good-natured opinion.

Nathan. Which was?

Dervis. "That beggars have alone true feelings for their fellows; that they alone have learnt the art of giving charity and alms with grace. Your predecessor," said he, "was too cold, too rough for me. He gave unkindly when he ever gave—nor was there any end to his enquiries who the poor man was. It was not enough for him to know his want and his distress; he must still know what cause had brought him low, that then he might too miserly weigh off the alms in beggarly proportion to that cause. Not so Al-Hafi! no! Nor will Saladin's alms, bestowed by your hands, appear unkind and hard! Al-Hafi is no rotten choaked pipe, which grumbling taints the pure and clearest water. He thinks—he feels like me."—So winning was the cunning fowler's flute, till I, poor wren, was in the net ensnared.—I, worse than fool—the fool of greater fools!

Nathan. Stop, stop friend dervis!

Dervis. Why?—Is it no folly then to plague and starve, to rob, and fleece, and murder men by thousands, and yet to pursue the appearance of being feelingly the friend of individuals? No folly this, to ape the Almighty's goodness, which knows of no distinction, and spreads its sun-beams and its showers over the bad and good, over the deserts and over the fields? To ape it with a hand that wants?

Nathan. Enough! Have done!

Dervis. I shall—but I must mention my *own* folly!—Is it not folly to find the good side of these follies, and for the sake of that to indulge them?—Eh! Is it not?

Nathan. Take my advice, my friend! and hasten to thy desert. I apprehend thy longer living amongst men, will drive all human feelings from thy heart.

Dervis. I fear the same. Farewell! [Going.]

Nathan. But why such hurry? Al-Hafi, stop! Thy desert will not escape thee.—Stop! stop! He! he! He's

He's deaf!—He's gone!—I might have asked him about our templar knight. He may have known him.

SCENE IV.

DAYA *coming on in haste.* NATHAN.

DAYA.

O Nathan! Nathan!
Nathan. Eh! What news?

Daya. He's seen again!

Nathan. Who?

Daya. Our saviour—walking under the palms again, and breaking now and then some dates.

Nathan. To eat them? (*shrugging his shoulders*) yet a templar knight?

Daya. Her piercing eye descried him from afar, half covered by the thicket of the grove—it follows him. She prays, she conjures you to walk up to him. She will direct you from the windows which way he went. Pray haste to him!

Nathan. Still dusty from the road?—'Twould be indecent!—You go to him, and tell him I'm returned. You'll see the gentleman avoided you but for my absence; he can't deny us, when invited by the father. So go—invite him in my name.

Daya. 'Twill not do, I'll lay you any thing—say what you please, he comes to no Jew.

Nathan. Then go and stop him, if you can; and if you cannot, pursue him with your eyes. I'll follow.

[*Go off on different sides of the stage.*]

SCENE V. A Palm-grove.

The TEMPLAR walking up and down. A LAY-BROTHER following him sideways, and at some distance, as if wanting to address him.

KNIGHT.

THAT fellow there follows one not without business. Mark how he sily watches these hands!—Good brother—or father, if you please.

Friar.

Friar. Your humble brother—and still less in his humility——

Knight. Well, brother; our charity begins at home. I swear I'm poor.

Friar. And yet I kindly thank you. May God bestow upon you his thousand blessings for that which you intended. 'Tis the will, 'tis not the act of giving, in which the merit of the giver lies.—Nor was I sent for begging alms.

Knight. Yet you were sent?

Friar. Yes, from the convent.

Knight. Where I just intended to call, hoping to find a pilgrim's portion.

Friar. The tables, though beset—yet you're welcome to return with me.

Knight. To what? For many a day, 'tis true, I have had no meat: But what harm? The dates are ripe.

Friar. My lord, do not indulge in that fruit. Too much is hurtful—obstructs the spleen—brings on melancholy.

Knight. But if I please to indulge melancholy? You were not sent to give me such a warning?

Friar. I was not. 'Twas to enquire about you, to try what man you are.

Knight. And come to tell me so yourself?

Friar. Why not?

Knight. A knowing one indeed!—Are there more of your mettle amongst you?

Friar. I can't tell.—Dear Sir, I must obey.

Knight. And you obey because you are bid, without reserve and reasoning?

Friar. Because I must obey.

Knight. Simplicity is ever right.—Yet you may tell me who's the man who wants to know of me.—I am ready to suppose it is not you.

Friar. Such freedom could not suit my humble state, nor be of use to me.

Knight. But then—to whom?

Friar. The patriarch: I am bound to think so—for he sent me on this errand.

Knight. The patriarch!—Does he not know the red cross on this mantle?

Friar.

Friar. —Even known to me.

Knight. Well, brother, well : I am a templar knight—a prisoner of war—and adding, that at Tebnin I was taken, when on the last day of the truce we attempted to surprise that castle, and force our march to Sidon ; that twenty more were taken, and that but I alone am pardoned.—The patriarch knows all—nay, more than he is entitled to ask.

Friar. —Yet little more than what he knew already.—His lordship could still wish to learn why you alone obtained the sultan's pardon?—why you alone?

Knight. I am as ignorant about it as your master.—My collar stript, I kneeled on my mantle to expect the deadly stroke, when lo! the sultan came up, fixing his eye upon me, and beckoned. They raised me from the ground—my chains are broken—attempting thanks, I see his eye in tears—both silent—he went off and I remained.—How all that came to pass, his lordship may unravel, if he pleases.

Friar. His lordship thinks that God preserved you in his wisdom for the sake of great achievements.

Knight. For the sake of great achievements, pshaw! to save a Jew girl from the flames—to convoy and to protect a pack of idle pilgrims to mount Sina—and so on.

Friar. May be—and more than that! May be that even he, the holy man, knows better business for so brave a knight.

Knight. Think you he does? Has he mentioned any thing to you?

Friar. Ay! ay! he has! I am to try whether you would be the man.

Knight. Well! try! (Let's see how he'll try me!) Eh?

Friar. The shortest way will be fair dealing and plain telling what the patriarch means.

Knight. Well!

Friar. He wants to entrust a letter to your care, and to have it safe—

Knight. By me? Am I a man to carry letters? Is that the business? Nobler than to save a Jew girl from the flames?

Friar. It must be! for his lordship says—it is of consequence for church and Christendom to have this letter safe—and that, so says his lordship too, God will reward it with a crown in heaven—which he presumes no man is more deserving of than you.

Knight. Than me?

Friar. For to deserve it, says his lordship, scarce any man is fitter.

Knight. Than me?

Friar. That being free to roam about, and knowing how to storm and to defend a place, you best can judge the strength and weakness of the inner second wall—Saladin's later work—and best can give advice and true accounts to the Christian hosts, who fight God's battles.

Knight. Hum! hum! good friar! Would I knew the contents of that letter.

Friar. To know them what they are, is much beyond my humble station. 'Tis directed to Philip king of France.—The patriarch—full oft I wondered how that holy man, entirely taken up with higher cares, the cares and thoughts of heaven—can humbly condescend to be so well informed of worldly matters. It must cost him hard.

Knight. Eh? and the patriarch?—

Friar. Exactly knows how—where—how strong—and from what part—should the war break out again.—The sultan is to open the campaign.

Knight. He knows?

Friar. He does—and wants his knowledge safe conveyed to the king, that he may judge the danger—whether 'twould be better to restore, cost what it may, the truce with Saladin, which not long since your order broke so bravely.

Knight. What a patriarch!—Yes! yes! The worthy gallant prelate wants me to be his—more than common envoy—wants me to be his—spy.—Tell him, good friar! that, tried by you, I am not the man—that still I am bound as prisoner of war—and that the business of a templar knight is fighting, not to act the spy.

Friar. I guessed it right!—nor do I blame you much, my gentle knight!—But hear—the best still follows.—The patriarch has, on enquiry, learnt the strong-hold's
D name,

name, and where it lies on Lebanon—that hold of safety where the wealth is lodged, wherewith Saladin's prudent father pays off the army, and supplies its wants and expeditions. To this strong-hold Saladin often goes through bye-roads—scarce attended.—Now you guess?

Knight. I hope not! never!——

Friar. Nothing more easy than to fall upon him on the road—to cut him off—you shudder.—Ah too nice! 'Tis but of late we had the spontaneous offer of two pious Maronites; they would have tried the adventure, had there been a hearty honest man to lead them on.

Knight. And he, the patriarch, has chosen me to be that hearty honest man?

Friar. He thinks king Philip might assist you best from Ptolemaïs, and lend a helping hand.

Knight. To me?—Did not you hear just now, how much I stand indebted to this Saladin? what I am obliged to him for?

Friar. I heard it well—forsooth!

Knight. And yet?

Friar. The patriarch thinks—'twas well enough; but God Almighty and your order's rule——

Knight. Can alter nothing! cannot order me to do a piece of villainy!

Friar. Indeed they cannot—will not! Yet he holds a rogue in man's opinion to be no rogue in God's.

Knight. Could I—a villain!—owe my life to Saladin, and take his life away?

Friar. Fie! fie!——He believes——that Saladin—a foe of Christendom—can never get a title to your friendship.

Knight. To my friendship? Is't friendship to the man, to refuse to do him an atrocious injury? to abhor the thought of black ungrateful villainy?——

Friar. Yet, in the patriarch's opinion, you owe no thanks for benefactions and for goodness *not intended*; and on that account both God and men are ready to acquit you; for as 'tis rumoured—and by his lordship understood—you was pardoned by the sultan, but for a something in your countenance and gait, which struck him as a likeness of his brother.——

Knight.

Knight. And he knew that? and yet? ah! if true! Ah! Saladin! If nature drew only a single stroke of my likeness on your brother's form, there must be something corresponding in my heart. Could I suppress it for a patriarch's sake? Nature, thou dost not thus belie us! Such contradictions can't disgrace the works of God!—Friar, be gone! Don't rouse my gall! Be gone!

Friar. I'm going, and—please your worship—go more pleased than I came. We—with your worship's leave—are bound to obey commands. [Parts.]

S C E N E VI.

TEMPLAR. *DAYA approaching, after having observed him for some time.*

DAYA.

FORSOOTH! the friar did not leave him in good humour—but on—to have my part.

Templar. Look, look!—The proverb's true, that monks and women are the devil's claws. He throws me from the one to the other.

Daya. What see I?—You, noble knight? Thank God! be thousand thanks to God! Where, heavens! were you all the while? I hope not ill?

Templar. No.

Daya. I hope you're well?

Templar. Yes, yes!

Daya. We were in great concern about you.

Templar. Ha! Were you faith?

Daya. Perhaps abroad?

Templar. Well guess'd!

Daya. And do return but now?

Templar. But yesterday.

Daya. And Recha's father is returned too; so that our Recha dares now hope.

Templar. For what?

Daya. For what so oft she begged you. Her father does invite you, kindly too. He comes from Babylon;

and twenty camels attending him, loaded with the richest goods, with spices, gems and stuffs, the finest which the East affords.

Templar. I have no occasion for them, nor shall I be his customer.

Daya. His people do respect him as a prince; and often have I wondered why him they call the *Wife*, they do not call the *Rich*.

Templar. Perhaps to them *wise* and *rich* are the same.

Daya. And more than that, they ought to have him called the *Good*; for you cannot conceive how good he is. When he was told what Recha owes to you, what would he in that moment have given and done for you!

Templar. Eh!

Daya. Try! Come and see!

Templar. What then? How quick that moment's past!

Daya. Could I so long have stayed a servant of his house, unless his goodness had retained me? You won't suppose I was forgetful of my Christian rank? Nor did it seem my fate to attend my husband to the wars of Palestina, and after all to live here a Jew girl's nurse. My dearest husband was a noble knight, belonging to the army of the Roman king, called Frederick Emperor.

Templar. —A Swift forsooth! who had the honour and the high distinction to be drowned with his majesty in a river, when bathing.—No more of it!—You told it a hundred times; and won't you ever have done to tease and to pursue me?

Daya. Pursue you! God!

Templar. Yes, yes, pursue me.—Mark! once for all! I won't see you any more! nor hear you! nor ever and anon be reminded of a thing I did unthinkingly, a riddle to myself. To repent of it, I could not wish. But look: If such a case should ever happen again, 'tis your fault, woman! that will check my rashness, and make me first enquire of this and that, and make me prudent—burn who may.

Daya. God forbid!

Templar. At least do me the favour from this day, no more to notice me, I beg. And do not bring the father
upon

upon my back. He is a Jew, and ever will be such—
and I'm a blunt, a downright German. As to the girl—
if ever it was here—(*pointing to his head*) 'tis gone.

Daya (*pointing to her heart.*) But you, my gentle
knight, she has you there.

Templar. But to what purpose, pray?

Daya. Who knows? We are not always what we
seem to be.

Templar. But seldom better.

[*Going.*

Daya. Pray stay!

Templar. Do not poison these palms.

Daya. Go! go then, German bear!—And yet I dare
not lose his track.

[*Follows him.*

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE I. *Palace of the Sultan.*

SALADIN and SITTAH playing at Chess.

SITTAH.

WHERE are you, Saladin? How do you play?

Saladin. Not well. Methinks however—

Sittah. Extremely well for me. Take back this move.

Saladin. Why?

Sittah. It lays open the knight.

Saladin. True. So then!

Sittah. Then I put—in between them.

Saladin. True—again.—Check then.

Sittah. It avails you nothing; for I cover thus, and you are as before.

Saladin. I am not likely to get out of this scrape without some loss. Well, take the knight, if you please.

Sittah. I do not want him—pass on.

Saladin. You do not make me any present thus. That place is better than my knight. Eh?

Sittah. May be.

Saladin. Yet do not count without your host; for look! I bet. You did not apprehend it.

Sittah. How could I think you would expose your queen?

Saladin. My queen?

Sittah. I see it plainly, that to-day I am to have the thousand dinars only.

Saladin. How so?

Sittah. You ask me still—because you lose on purpose.—And 'tis no advantage—for, not to mention that the

the pleasure is less, was I not ever more the gainer when I lost? And when did you forget to let me have your comfort for my loss, the double stake?

Saladin. Ay look! may be you lost on purpose when you ever lost.

Sittah. May be, dear brother, that, for your indulgence, I did not learn the game so well.

Saladin. But we neglect the board. Go on.

Sittah. Is it thus to be? Well, check—and double check!

Saladin. Indeed I did not see this stroke, which, threatening my king, cuts off my queen.

Sittah. But could you help it? See—

Saladin. No, no. Take, take my queen. I never had good luck with her.

Sittah. With her alone?

Saladin. Away with her!—It does not hurt me, for now I am safe again.

Sittah. My brother taught me well what respect is due to queens.

[Does not take her.]

Saladin. Take her—or not, as you please. She is quite dead to me.

Saladin. Go on.

Sittah. Check!—and check!—and check!—

Saladin. And mate!

Sittah. Not quite; whether you put your bishop between—or something else—no matter what.

Saladin. Well, well!—you have the game; Al-Hafi pays.—Let him come in directly!—You were not wrong indeed, I was not wholly at the board—was inattentive; and then—these plainer men—who dared to put them on the board? They do not remind one—do not strike one's fancy. Was I to play with the Iman? But why? Loss wants apology. No Sittah! 'twas not the plainness of the men which made me lose; 'twas your art—your coolness and your penetration—

Sittah. Even thus your kindness means to blunt the sting and bitterness of loss.—Enough; you did not mind the game. You were distracted, even more than I am.

Saladin. Than you? And pray! what could distract you?

Sittah.

Sittah. Why your distraction!—O Saladin! I fear we shall not long enjoy these peaceful parties!

Saladin. You hint the troubles, which, for ought I know, may break out again. They may! I do not care!—The first infraction was not mine; I could have wished to prolong the truce—to help my Sittah by so doing to a worthy husband—and he must have been Richard's brother. Eh? Is not he the man?

Sittah. 'Tis my brother's fondness for his Richard!

Saladin. And if our brother Melek had obtained the hand of Richard's sister—could any family have vied with ours? 'Twas then indeed the first amongst the first, the best amongst the best!—You see I'm not the last in self-love and in boasting; and think me worthy of my friends.—

Sittah. What noble prospect of a noble race! What race!

Sittah. Did I not ever laugh at these pleasing dreams? You do not know them—will not know these Christians. Their pride is—to be Christians, not—to be men; for, even what they derive from their founder, what virtue, what humanity, their superstitious tenets cover or pervade, they hold dear—not for the sake of mankind—but for the sake of his commands, because Christ bid them so—because Christ set the example.—'Tis well enough he was so good a man! 'Tis well enough his virtues were to be trusted! His virtues?—No! His name alone must lord it every where—and must disgrace—must swallow up the names of every prophet, saint, and friend to mankind. The name is their concern.

Saladin. You mean, they should not have insisted on your and Melek's being Christians first, before you might presume to love your Christian partners?

Sittah. Indeed they should not! For strange to think, that none but Christians should be fit to inspire and to return that mutual love, which by the laws of God unites and draws our sexes!

Saladin. They do submit their faith to greater blunders—so this goes down apace.—Yet, Sittah, you are wrong.—Blame not the Christians for that dull pretence—the knights templar—urge it, not as Christians, but

but as knights templar. They! they alone prevent our success. They will not part with Acca—on any account; and Acca was to be the dowry of King Richard's sister. Now, to ensure their game, they play the part of monks—of stupid monks; and try a random shot, the truce yet scarce expiring.—Well! well!—let go on—I should like it well enough, provided all was well here.

Sittah. —Was well? Can any other thing distract you?

Saladin. What ever and anon did plague my mind.—I was on Libanon, and saw our father almost overwhelmed by cares.—

Sittah. Good old man!

Saladin. He cannot go through—he is in perplexing straits—things fail him here and there—he wants—

Sittah. He wants? Pray what?

Saladin. What, was it not for that, I should not deign to mention; what, if possess'd of it, I do not value, but, wanting, cannot be without.—Where is Al-Hafi? He is sent for, I hope?—Distressing want! Well met, my Hafi.

S C E N E II.

AL-HAFI, *the Dervis.* SALADIN. SITTAH.

AL-HAFI.

I Hope the money came from Egypt, and there came plenty.—

Saladin. Didst hear of it?

Al-Hafi. Not I. I thought 'twas to receive it.

Saladin. You! Pay to Sittah the sum of a thousand dinars!

[*Walks pensive up and down.*]

Al-Hafi. Pay!—pay!—and not—receive!—Instead of something, faith! 'tis less than nothing.—To Sittah, Sir?—Again? And lost? and lost at chess?—The game still on the board!

Sittah. Don't be jealous of my luck.

Al-Hafi (looking on the board.) Why jealous? If—you know.

E

Sittah.

Sittab. Hush, Hafi! hush!

Al-Hafi. (*Still attentive on the game.*) Good luck! if first obtained!

Sittab. Al-Hafi!

Al-Hafi (*to Sittab.*) The white ones your's? You gave the check?

Sittab. 'Tis well he did not hear.

Al-Hafi. Is he to move?

Sittab (*coming up to him.*) Pray say I may receive the money.

Al-Hafi (*still intent on the chess.*) Well!—yes! You shall receive it as you always do.

Sittab. Why? Do you rave?

Al-Hafi. 'Tis not yet won. You did not lose it, Saladin.

Saladin. Yes, yes! I lost it; and you pay!

[*Scarce paying any attention,*

Al-Hafi. Pay!—pay!—and there's a queen.

Saladin. —Quite dead—quite out of question.

Sittab. Have done, and say I may send for the money.

Al-Hafi (*not to be diverted from the game.*) Of course you may—as usual.—And yet—though she, the queen, be dead—you are not mate indeed.

Saladin (*steps forth, and overturns the men.*) I am; and will be mate.

Al-Hafi. Ay! so! Such game, such gain! and won as it will be paid.

Saladin (*to Sittab.*) What says he?

Sittab (*beckoning to Al-Hafi.*) You know him—how he likes to contradict—wants coaxing—nay, that after all he is envious of my fortune.—

Saladin. Envious? Not of my sister? What do I hear, Hafi? Envious?

Al-Hafi. May be so.

Sittab. Yet has he ever paid me well;—and will to-day. Pray let him! And for you—be gone! I shall send for the money.

Al-Hafi. No; I cannot longer play that farce. He must hear it.

Saladin. What farce? Pray what?

Sittab. Al-Hafi, Is't thus you keep your word?

Al-Hafi. Could I foresee 'twould go such lengths?

Saladin.

Saladin. And—what am I to hear?

Sittah. Al-Hafi, I beseech—be prudent—be discreet.

Saladin. 'Tis odd! my Sittah should so warmly want a stranger's prudence, and by a dervis rather than myself, entreat her brother—to deprecate.—Al-Hafi, I command—Speak out!—

Sittah. 'Tis not worth your while, my brother; 'tis a trifle, which must not give you more concern than it deserves. You know that more than once I won that sum at chess; and as I did not want the money then, I left it in Al-Hafi's hands, supposing that the privy-purse, to him entrusted, is rather low. But do not mind it! I do not mean it as a present to you, to him, or to the treasure.

Al-Hafi. If it were no more——

Sittah. And other sums——and what you pleased to grant me during life, is likewise left unpaid for some months past.

Al-Hafi. ——Still more.

Saladin. Still more? Speak out!

Al-Hafi. Since we have expected the Egyptian money—she has——

Sittah (to Saladin.) ——Why would you hear him?

Al-Hafi. ——not only not received any thing——

Saladin. Good girl!—but occasionally advanced. Eh?

Al-Hafi. ——Supplied the court, and made good your expences without assistance.

Saladin. Ha! that's my sister! [Embracing her.]

Sittah. And who could have enabled me to do all that, but you, my loving brother?

Al-Hafi (apart.) I'm sure he will disable her again, and pump her to his level.

Saladin. I poor? the brother poor? When had I more? when less? One suit, one sword, one horse, one God! What need I more? When can I want that? And yet, Al-Hafi, I might chide you——

Sittah. Forbear, dear brother, and forgive. Might I but have it in my power to ease our father's cares—by similar duty.

Saladin. Ah! ah! That takes my joy away—at once. —For me, I want not; cannot want. But he's in want, and through him I want all.—Pray tell me what is to

be done—To depend upon the arrival of the Egyptian treasure—may long frustrate our hopes. It is—it may be long before it comes. God knows what is the reason, for all is quiet there.—To lessen, to reform, to save expences, I am ready—with all my heart—in what concerns but me alone; for others must not suffer on that account.—After all, what object will that saving be? A horse, a suit, a sword, I cannot deprive myself of; nor can I clip what's due to God. It is so very little that satisfies him—my heart.—But Hafi! In truth I had depended much upon the surplus of thy cash.

Al-Hafi. The surplus? Pray fairly tell, had not you impaled me, or at least condemned me to the halter, if ever you had caught me in vile surplusage? To cheat you—to purloin your monies, Sir, was more adviseable.

Saladin. —But what's to do?—You might at least have borrowed from any one but her.—

Sittab. And would I have allowed him to deprive me of that privilege? Still I insist on it; for I am not quite exhausted.

Saladin. —not quite! 'Twould quite undo me.—Make haste, Al-Hafi! Do! Raise money where, from whom, and how you can! Go, write and promise—But mark! beware of those whom I enriched. To apply to them for money, might have the appearance as if we did recall our benefactions. Wait on the worst of misers. They will be readiest to advance us.—They know how much their money produces in my hands.

Al-Hafi. I do not know such gentry.

Sittab. I just was told your friend returned.

Al-Hafi (*startled.*) My friend? my friend? Who is he?

Sittab. Your famous, glorious Jew.

Al-Hafi. My glorious Jew? Did ever I indulge his praises?

Sittab. I well remember how you told me once, that, a favourite of his God, he, by his bounty, had received the brimful measure of every kind of worldly blessings—small and great.

Al-Hafi. Did I say so?—And that's to say?—

Sittab. The smaller blessing—riches; the greatest—wisdom.

Al-Hafi.

Al-Hafi. Why? I say that of a Jew?

Sittab. You did not tell me of your Nathan? Eh?

Al-Hafi. May be! of him! of Nathan!—I did not recollect the man.—Is he returned indeed? If so, he's likely better off than people say.—Well! right: They called him once the Wise, nay, called him rich.

Sittab. —And call him rich now more than ever; for lo! the city rings of one unanimous report of treasures rich he brought with him.

Al-Hafi. If he be rich again, then, faith! he will be wife again.

Sittab. What think you, Hafi? Go to him.

Al-Hafi. Pray on what errand? To borrow money? Yes, you know him well.—He lend us money!—His wisdom is to lend no money.

Sittab. Yet you did paint him in a different light.

Al-Hafi. At most he gives you goods on credit. But money? money never!—And for the rest he is a Jew, as many others are. He is clever; knows the world, and plays chess well.—Yet if he does excel with some in good qualifications, he is not less a clever Jew in bad ones.—Pray do not think of him.—As to the poor, he will give alms like Saladin—if not so many and so great ones, at least not more unwilling—and without any show. The Jew, the Christian, the Parsee, and the Musselman, are equally welcome.

Sittab. And such a man——

Saladin. How happens it I never heard of him before?

Sittab. —To be unwilling to assist my brother? my Saladin, who never wants himself, but wants for others?

Al-Hafi. But look! there's the Jew again; the common downright Jew!—You may believe me! he is so full of envy, so jealous too of charity and alms, that he could wish to engross each poor man's thanks, God reward you! 'Tis for that reason—that he may never want a bounty to the poor—that he never lends; for charity is commanded him in the Law, which did not teach him that complying courteous temper; and thus his charity makes him a most uncourteous fellow. And then, 'tis some time past, that we fell out; yet I must do him justice. He is good for any thing, but for
lending

30 NATHAN THE WISE.

lending money. Indeed he is! And so—I'm going—to knock at other doors.—And faith! I just remember now a Moor—a miser—rich—Well found!—I'm going.
[Parts.

Sittah. Why such a hurry, Hafi?

Saladin. Ah! let him! let him!

S C E N E III.

SITTAH and SALADIN.

SITTAH.

HE runs as he were happy to escape us.—What does it mean?—May be that he mistook the man?—May be he tells us stories?

Saladin. How can you ask me? Scarce did I know of whom you spoke; and your Jew Nathan's name I never heard before.

Sittah. How could you avoid hearing of him, whom people say to have explored the tombs of David and of Solomon, and to have unsealed them by some secret mighty spell? whom they report to have from time to time, from out these royal caves, brought forth his wealth immense, which sure bespeaks such royal treasures.

Saladin. Dug he his wealth from tombs, it did not belong to either of these kings. They were the tombs of fools.

Sittah. —or knaves!—and, to tell you truth, his wealth flows from a richer spring, than from a tomb of ill-got mammon.

Saladin. He trades, I understand.

Sittah. His camels trade on every road—through every desert; his vessels ride in every harbour. So Hafi told me formerly with pleasure; adding, how nobly and how greatly his friend employs his profits, which, with prudent industry to gain, he does not think to be disgraceful: with pleasure adding, that his mind is free from prejudice and error, his heart is open to each virtue, and tuned for every beauty.

Saladin.

Saladin. And yet just now he spoke so wavering and so cold about him.

Sittah. Less cold than both; as if not knowing whether 'twas safe to praise him, or whether 'twas just to blame him without reason.—It may be too, that even the very best of Israel's tribe can't go entirely beyond their common line, and, on that account, Al-Hafi may have reason to be ashamed of his friendship! However that may be—whether more or less a Jew—provided he be rich—it does not matter!

Saladin. You don't intend, however, to attempt his property by force?

Sittah. What do you call so? Fire and sword? No, no. With the weak, is not weakness their compulsion? And now let's to my harem to hear a singing girl, quite new—but just come in; my scheme on Nathan is not fully ripe.—Come! come! [Part.

S C E N E IV.

(*Before the House of NATHAN, near the Palm-grove.*)

RECHA and NATHAN coming out of it. DAYA following soon after,

R E C H A.

YOU have tarried long, dear father! He is not likely to be met so late.

Nathan. If not in the grove, 'twill be somewhere else.—Be not uneasy.—Look! there is Daya coming.

Recha. She certainly has lost him.

Nathan. Perhaps she has not.

Recha. She would make greater haste.

Nathan. She has not seen us yet.

Recha. Now she observes us.

Nathan. —and comes quicker on. Look not uneasy!—

Recha. Could you bear me more composed? or see me cooler? without concern about the man to whom I owe

owe my life? My life—so dear to me, because it was your gift.

Nathan. I would not have you otherwise, my child! even should I know that something more than gratitude beats in your heart.

Recha. What father!

Nathan. You ask me, so shy you ask me; whatever yet may stir within your breast is native innocence. Do not mind it. I don't. But give your word to deal with candour, not to conceal from me any of your wishes, whenever they speak a plainer language in your breast.

Recha. The very thought of any secret, withheld from you, makes me unhappy.

Nathan. No more of that; 'tis settled once for all. But there is Daya.—Well?

Daya. He still walks on in yonder grove, and will soon pass that wall. Look—there he comes!

Recha. Ah! and seems unresolved what way to take.

Daya. No, no. He makes the tour of the convent more than once—and coming round he must pass here.

—I lay.—

Recha. You're right!—Did you talk to him? And how was he disposed?

Daya. As usual.

Nathan. Take care he does not see you. Step back—go rather home.

Recha. Once more to look at him!—The hedge deprives me of his sight.

Daya. Come! come! Let's follow that advice. You run a chance, should he observe you, that he may turn about.

Recha. The hedge!

Nathan. If he comes out of it, he must of course observe you. Walk in then!

Daya. Come! come! there is a window from which we may observe him safely. [Part.

SCENE

S C E N E V.

NATHAN, and soon after the KNIGHT.

NATHAN.

I Am almost fearful of that singular man—and startled at the roughness of his virtue—yet he's but a man!—Ha! there he comes!—in truth a manly youth. I like that good, that daring look! that nimble, upright gait! May be the shell is bitter, not the kernel.—Where did I see that countenance? I beg your pardon, noble Frank.—

Knight. For what?

Nathan. I beg your pardon——

Knight. For what, pray, Jew? Speak out.——

Nathan. For this my free address.

Knight. Can I prevent it? But be short.

Nathan. Pray pardon me, nor do neglect the man with proud contempt, whom you obliged for ever.

Knight. How so? I guess. You are——

Nathan. I am Nathan—am the father of that girl, whom you so nobly rescued from the flames. I come—

Knight. If 'tis to thank me, stop! I had too much of it for such a trifle.—And as to you, you don't owe me any thanks. I did not know she was your daughter. 'Tis the duty of a templar-knight to lend assistance where 'tis wanted. And then—I was just then so sick of life, that I with readiness did risk it for another's—nay for a Jew girl's too.

Nathan. 'Tis great—yet horrid!—I conceive his turn. The modest greatness of his noble mind puts on the cloak of horror, to avoid our admiration.——But if it thus disdains that tribute, what grateful tribute will it not reject alike?—Were you no stranger in this place, nor prisoner of war, I should not have presumed to ask for your commands, nor offered you my humble services. What can one do for you?

Knight. Nothing.

Nathan. I am a man of fortune.

Knight. The richer Jew is not the better one, in my opinion.

F

Nathan.

Nathan. May you not want the best possession of the better Jew?—his wealth—his humble disposition?

Knight. I may some day or other—here, for this mantle's sake (*pointing to his mantle*) if ever worn to rags, past reparation, I come to you to have a new one, and call for cloth or money upon trust. Don't frown, my friend, nor look so dark. You are still safe; 'tis not yet to that. Pray judge yourself (*showing his lifted mantle*;) 'tis still in tolerable good condition—except that ugly spot;—'twas singed when I brought your daughter from the fire.

Nathan (*lifting the border of his mantle, and looking at .*) 'Tis odd, that such a spot, that branded stigma, should give the better evidence in his behalf. I might—nay, I must kiss it!—Your pardon, Sir!—I could not help it.

Knight. Why?

Nathan. A tear dropt down upon it.

Knight. No matter! It has other spots.—(But faith! that Jew confounds one.) [*Apart.*]

Nathan. Pray would you be so kind to send your mantle to my daughter, to look—at—once?

Knight. Why? For what end?

Nathan. Good Sir! that she may press her lips against that spot; for, to embrace your knees she dares not hope.

Knight. But Jew—your name is Nathan?—But Nathan—you speak so well—so pointed—I am loth—indeed—I might——

Nathan. Dissemble as you please. Even there I find you out. You are too good, too gentle—not to be polite.—The girl all tremblingly alive and feeling—her female guardian too officious—her father was abroad.—Concerned for her name and reputation, you fled the trial—fled from conquest. For all that, Sir, I thank you.—

Knight. I own you know how templars ought to think.

Nathan. Why templars only? I know how good men think, and know that good men grow in every country.

Knight. However, with some difference?

Nathan. No doubt! They differ in complexion, dress, and form——

Knight.

Knight. And further, you allow another difference of more or less in different countries?

Nathan. 'Tis of no consequence that. The great want every where a great extent of ground; their branches would prevent the spreading of their neighbours, if too closely planted. But the middling kind, like us, are common every where; and might thrive well without reviling one another. The knotty hawthorn should not rail at any of its crooked neighbours, nor should the loftier tree forget its earth-born offspring.

Knight. Well said!—Yet pray remember the first revilers of their neighbours. You know what nation first indulged the proud conceit of being favourites of God? Why, if not hating, despise them for that very pride; that pride, which, handed down to Christians and to Musselmans, is not ashamed to say, “Our God alone is “God!”—You wonder that a Christian, in a templar’s dress, should speak such language. But pray, when has that pious frenzy, to have the better God, to force that better God on the minds of mankind, appeared in blacker, more atrocious form, than now—than here?—Be blind who may!—Forget what I have told you; and leave me!

[*Going.*

Nathan. Ha! never. It draws me rather nearer;—come! come! we must be friends! You hold my nation in contempt as much as you please. Neither of us chose his country and his nation. Are we our nation? And what is nation? Was any one of us, Christians or Jews, a Jew or Christian sooner than he was a man? Ah! would to God I had found in you the man! one of the few, contented with the name of Man!

Knight. By heaven you have found him, Nathan!—Your hand!—I blush I could mistake you for a single moment!

Nathan. And I am proud of it, The vulgar are but rarely mistaken.

Knight. Uncommon men are rarely forgotten.—Yes, Nathan; we must be friends.

Nathan. We are already.—What joy this for my Recha!—And ah! what fair, what glorious prospect opening to my view!—You should first know her!

Knight. I shall be happy.—But look! who hastens from your door? 'Tis her Daya.

Nathan. 'Tis her. In such an anxious hurry!

Knight. I hope our Recha is safe.

S C E N E VI.

The same, and DAYA in a hurry.

DAYA.

Nathan! Nathan!

Nathan. Eh?

Daya. Your pardon, gentle knight! that I must interrupt you.

Nathan. Pray what's the matter?

Knight. What?

Daya. The sultan sent a message. He wants you. Ah! God! the sultan.

Nathan. Me? The sultan. May be he wants to see the goods I brought with me. Go tell they are but just unpacking.

Daya. No! no! He does not want to see them: 'Tis you he wants to see—and soon—as soon as possible.

Nathan. I shall wait on him.—Go.

Daya. Your pardon, knight!——O God! we are afraid! What may the sultan mean?

Nathan. We'll see.—Go! go!

S C E N E VII.

NATHAN and the KNIGHT.

KNIGHT.

YOU do not know him yet?—I mean, from personal acquaintance.

Nathan. No, not yet. I have not shunned him, nor have I courted his acquaintance. Common report was too much in his favour. I chose rather to believe than to see. Yet—if he saved your life—

Knight.

Knight. He did. To him I owe it.

Nathan. That life, through which he gave me two, nay three, at once, has altered our respective situations, has bound and tied me to his service; so that I long to know his pleasure and commands. I am ready to perform them all, and to tell him that it is on your account.

Knight. I could not thank him yet myself, though, for that purpose, I stepped very often into his way. When first he saw me, 'twas a sudden stroke that fixed him—so sudden as it passed. He may not recollect me. And yet he must once more at least remember me, in order to decide my fate. 'Tis not sufficient that by his command I live. I must expect to hear for whom, and under what command, I am to live.

Nathan. So it is; and so I won't lose a moment. A word may give an opportunity to mention you.—So with your leave I'm going.—But when, when shall we see you at my house?

Knight. As soon as you will permit me.

Nathan. As soon as you please.

Knight. 'Twill be to-day.

Nathan. Your name I beg.

Knight. My name was——my name is Court of Stauffen.

Nathan. Of Stauffen? Stauffen?

Knight. Why does that strike you?

Nathan. Of Stauffen? May be that others of that name and family——

Knight. O yes! there were—there are more of that family—here rotting—my uncle—ay, my father, would I say.—But why do you look so sharp?

Nathan. 'Tis nothing! O nothing! How could it tire, my friend, to look at you?

Knight. Therefore I leave you. The sharp and searching eye of prying friends finds often more than they would wish to find. I fear it, Nathan. Let time, let not the searching curious eye try what we are.

[*Parts.*

Nathan (looking after him with astonishment.) “The sharp and searching eye of prying friends finds often more than they would wish to find.”—’Tis truly as if

if he read the inner secrets of my heart!—And why not he? Might I not read them full as well?—'Tis not alone Wolf's form and stature; his voice and countenance are just the same. Just so he tossed his head; just so he wore his sword, and stroked his eye-brows with his hand, as if attempting to conceal the fiery flashes of his lively eye.—'Tis odd such strongly marked features should lie sleeping in our minds, until a word, a sound awakes them.—Of Stauffen?—'Tis so. 'Twas Fillneck and 'twas Stauffen.—Soon I shall know it better. But first to Saladin.—And you, you prying listener! come! draw nearer!

S C E N E VIII.

DAYA and NATHAN.

NATHAN.

I Would lay any thing, that both your hearts are in a flutter, and pant for other news than those of Saladin's commands.

Daya. And could you blame her? Just then you were in closer conversation, when that cursed message drove us from the window.

Nathan. Go! tell her then she may expect him every minute.

Daya. Indeed? indeed?

Nathan. I can, I hope, depend upon you: Take heed—I beg. You never will repent of it. Even your conscience will be satisfied. But do not thwart my plans. Go tell your stories and ask questions—with prudence and discretion.

Daya. How idle to remind one of such trifling duties!—I go; and you be gone. For look! a second message from the sultan—Al-Hafi comes. [*Parts.*]

S C E N E

S C E N E IX.

NATHAN. AL-HAFI.

AL-HAFI.

HA! ha! 'Tis you I wanted.
Nathan. But is there such a hurry? What does he want then?

Al-Hafi. Who?

Nathan. Saladin!—I'm coming—coming.

Al-Hafi. To whom? To Saladin?

Nathan. Did not he send you?

Al-Hafi. Me? No, no. But has he sent already?

Nathan. He has.

Al-Hafi. Well; if so, the business is done.

Nathan. Pray what?

Al-Hafi. 'Tis not my fault; I do protest I tried every thing in order to prevent it—told stories—nay, told lies.

Nathan. To prevent what?

Al-Hafi. Your being named his treasurer. It grieves me. I condole you. But faith! I will not see you in the scrape, for I march off directly. You know which way I'm going. So, friend, for your commands. You are welcome to my service.

Nathan. But pray consider, that I heard of nothing yet. What do you rave and prate about?

Al-Hafi. As to the bags—you have them ready.

Nathan. Bags?

Al-Hafi. The money faith! which you are to lend him.

Nathan. Pshaw! Is that the mighty business all?

Al-Hafi. I shall tamely see how by and by, and by degrees, he pumps you out from top to toe? Behold how lavishness, with ever-wanting hands, will borrow from the well-stored barns of wiser charity, and borrow on and on, till they are emptied, and their poor connate little mice are starved?—You think that he, who wants the assistance of your money, will follow your advice?—Yes, follow your advice! He never followed any but his own.—Consider only what just now happened.

Nathan. Pray what?

Al-Hafi. I was called in just when he had played chefs. His sister, Sittah, plays it well enough. The game, which Saladin looked on and gave for lost, was standing on the board quite undisturbed. I looked at it, and lo! it was not lost.

Nathan. It happened well for you.

Al-Hafi. If he had moved the king close to his pawn when she gave check—but I could wish to show you how it was.

Nathan. I give you credit.

Al-Hafi. —then the tower got free; and she was lost.—I called him up to let him see all that—and think!—

Nathan. He was not of your opinion.

Al-Hafi. He did not hear me, and overturned the game.

Nathan. O! O!

Al-Hafi. —and tells he will be mate. He will! 'Tis nonsense. Is that playing?

Nathan. Not well indeed.—'Tis playing with a play.

Al-Hafi. And yet it was for something.

Nathan. The money? No! You did not mind that. But not to hear you! not to have your kind advice in a matter of such importance! nor to admire the keenness of your wit! that, Hafi! that provokes your gall! Eh?

Al-Hafi. Less than you ween. I tell you all, that you may know what sort of man he is. In short, I cannot bear it any longer. There I am courting every swarthy Moor, enquiring whether they will lend him money.—I, who never begged for myself, am begging now for others; for courting loans is begging, and lending out for premium and for interest is robbing. Amongst my Ghebers on the banks of the Ganges, we do not want these tricks, nor am I *there* to be the tool of either. But there are men only *there*; for *here*, I know of none but you, who might live on the Ganges.—Therefore consider, and resolve to go with me. Leave all that trash behind, which he so dearly wants, and by and by will strip from you. There is an end of it at once. Come! come!

Nathan. If all be gone, it will be time enough to follow that advice. I will consider of the matter. But stop——

Al-Hafi.

A PHILOSOPHIC DRAMA. 41

Al-Hafi. Consider? I do not see. It is so plain.

Nathan. Stop only till I have seen the sultan, and take leave——

Al-Hafi. The man who stops in order to consider, wants reasons only to refuse us; and he, who cannot bravely resolve for independence, must ever be a slave to others.—You have your choice; Farewell!—My road is this! and your's lies on the other side.

Nathan. Al-Hafi! Still I hope you'll settle your accounts?

Al-Hafi. Pshaw! The surplus of my cash is not worth telling; and my accounts are settled by you, friend, or by Sittah.—Farewell!

Nathan (looking after him.) I may warrant them, and will be bound for thee! Indeed the beggar is the only king!

[Parting on the other side of the stage.]

END of the SECOND ACT.

G

ACT

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

(*An Apartment in the House of NATHAN.*)

RECHA and DAYA.

RECHA.

HOW, Daya, said my dearest father? "I might expect him every minute?" That sounds, indeed, as if we might have seen him sooner—for 'tis many minutes since! But why remember those long—those past ones only? 'Tis better to indulge the next—the present moment; and that will come which brings him here.

Daya. Perplexing message of the sultan! Had it not happened, our Nathan would have brought him here directly.

Recha. Supposing now that happy moment come, accomplishing the dearest—warmest of my wishes: Pray what hereafter?

Daya. Hereafter what? Then I indulge the hope of seeing soon the warmest of my wishes accomplished.

Recha. But what will then fill up the blank of this my heart?—Ah! nothing. I am afraid.——

Daya. My wishes will supply its place, and fill it—my wishes, child, to see you once in Europe, in worthy hands.

Recha. Your wishes? never: Whatever may endear them to your mind, will ever guard my heart against them. Your country draws your mind, and should not mine retain me? The remembrance of your absent friends, should that prove stronger than the duty which I owe to those I see about me?

Daya.

Daya. 'Tis to no purpose your resistance! The ways of heaven are not to be opposed. Eh! What say you, child, if he who saved you was to be the man, elected by his God, for whom he fights, to bring you to that country for which you were intended?

Recha. Ah Daya! dearest Daya! how you talk again! What singular conceits!—"His God, for whom he fights!" To whom does God belong? Who is that God?—the property of men?—That God, who wants to have his battles fought by men?—How can we know our destination, or understand for what a place we are born, if it be not that where we are born?—I am glad my father did not hear you.—Good man! Could he provoke you constantly to talk against him?—to alienate my mind, as if no happiness for me was to be hoped for but far from him? What does provoke you to mix the weeds or flowers of your native country amongst the seed of sense and reason, which, pure and uncorrupted, he planted in my mind?—My dearest Daya! let me tell you once for all, he will not suffer your entangling weeds, or gayer flowers, growing on that ground!—and even should they suit, and grace it well, 'tis fair to tell you, that I find it much impoverished by them. Nor does their fragrancy and various scented sweetness well agree with me. It overpowers my head, and makes me giddy! Your head, for aught I know, is used to it: I do not blame your nerves for being stronger and unaffected by their smell. 'Twill not agree with mine; your angel had almost overturned my brains. A shameful farce indeed! 'Twill ever make me blush before my father.

Daya. A shameful farce—indeed! as if good sense and reason were but at home with you! A farce! Was I indulged to speak!

Recha. You are; and ever were. Did I not listen with a close attention to all your stories, as often as you pleased to entertain me with the worthies of your faith? Did I not pay the willing tribute which is due to them? My admiration to their noble actions, and to their sufferings my tears? As to their faith, indeed, I could not fairly look upon it as their best accomplishment. But

foothing—sweetly soothing! was that doctrine, “that
 “their and our reliance on Almighty God, does not de-
 “pend on our opinions.”—Ah, Daya! my father told
 it oft, and oftentimes did you well agree with him.
 Why do you undermine the grounds you laid with him,
 with helping hands?—But, Daya! faith this is no con-
 versation fit for the instant meeting of our friend. For
 me—it may be so, because he may—Hark, Daya!
 Hear! A knock! Ah! if ’twas him! Hark!

S C E N E II.

RECHA, DAYA, the KNIGHT; to whom somebody,
behind the Scenes, opens the door, saying,

Walk in, Sir, here.

RECHA (*frightened, but recollecting herself, she kneels
 before him.*)

TIS him!—my saviour! ah!——
Knight. That to avoid, I kept so long away; and
 yet——

Recha. Once more I will thank God prostrate at the
 feet of this proud man—not thank this man, he wants
 no thanks; wants thanks as little as the bucket which
 was busy at this fire. He went to the water, was filled,
 emptied—unconcerned. Just so this man. So he was
 pushed into the fire. I fell into his arms, and stuck
 to them just as a spark would stick to this his man-
 tle—till a force unknown—I do not know who or
 what—threw both of us out of the flames.—No thanks
 are due indeed!—In Europe wine will operate still
 greater things—and templar knights are bound to do
 such wonders—they must, like well-trained dogs, obey,
 and fetch from fire and water.

*Knight (who all that while stares at her with astonish-
 ment.)* O Daya, Daya! Though in moments of affliction
 and of gall my humour used you ill, why must you my
 unguarded follies have conveyed to her? That ven-
 geance

geance was too bitter, Daya! It will, I hope, engage you to greater kindness towards me and her hereafter.

Daya. I do not apprehend that these occasional sorrows of her tender heart did hurt your interest.

Recha. Why? moments of affliction? Why could you be so covetous of them, and hold them dearer than your life?

Knight. Good lovely child!—my mind is in suspense, whether I must hear or see!—"Twas not the girl I fetched from the flames—indeed not she.—For who could know her, and not have prevented me?—Sure—the fright—the terror—may have——

[Pauses as if lost in contemplation.]

Recha. Yet I do find you quite the same (*pauses likewise, then interrupts his reveries:*) But now, Sir, let us ask you where you staid so long?—Though one might ask you rather where you are at present?

Knight. I am, perhaps, where I ought not to be.

Recha. And were, perhaps, where you should not have been.

Knight. I was—on—what's his name—on Sina.

Recha. On Sina?—Ah charming! Now I learn at last, if it be true——

Knight. What? That there one sees the place, where Moses stood in sight of God, when——

Recha. Not that—for sure in any place he stood in sight of God; of that I am well enough convinced.—I want to learn from you, if there be any truth in a report, that the ascent to Sina's top is not so toilsome as the coming down the hill?—for mark! whatever other mountains I climbed up before, I found the contrary of that assertion.—Well, Sir!—you turn away from me—disdain to look at me.——

Knight. 'Tis but to hear you better.

Recha. ——or not to let me see your smiling at my plain simplicity, which could not ask you any better questions about that holy mount.

Knight. Then faith, I must look freely up to your eyes.—But why? you cast them down, and in your turn forbear a smile. Mark, child! how odd it is, I should attempt the reading in your doubtful countenance what you so plainly tell me—so plainly do conceal

ceal from me!—Ah Recha, Recha! he told me truth,
“Go know her first!”

Recha. Who told you so?—of whom?

Knight. Your father told me; “Go and know her
“first!”—and so he told of you.

Daya. Did I not tell the same?—Not I as well as he?

Knight. But pray! where is he? Still with the sultan?

Recha. There is no doubt of that.

Knight. Still there?—I am forgetful faith! No, no;
it cannot be.—I doubt not, or he waits for me there, at
the convent; there was our appointment, or I am mis-
taken.—So, with your leave, I go to bring him here.—

Daya. That is my business, Sir: Stay, stay. I answer
for his coming.

Knight. Not so! for he looks out for me, not you.
Moreover, he may have got into a scrape with Saladin;
—and there is danger if I do not meet him.

Recha. What? Danger?

Knight. For me, for you, for him: The more I stay,
the more. [Parts.

S C E N E III.

RECHA and DAYA.

RECHA.

WHAT means that, Daya? What struck him
thus to depart?

Daya. Ah! let him, let him. 'Tis no bad sign, I
ween.

Recha. Of what?

Daya. That something is going on within. It boils;
he wants to keep it down; so let him; for now it is
your turn.

Recha. My turn? I do not understand you any more
than I did him.

Daya. 'Tis your turn now to retaliate upon him;
but be not too severe, nor too revengeful.

Recha. I do not comprehend you.

Daya.

A PHILOSOPHIC DRAMA. 47

Daya. Pray! is your little heart—quite easy, and has quite recovered its former peace?

Recha. It has.

Daya. But own, at least, you are well pleased at the perturbation of his heart, and owe your peace of mind his uneasiness?

Recha. I do not know; however, I must own to you, 'tis strange that this sudden peace should follow such a storming bustle in my heart. His ruddy open face, his conversation—

Daya. —has fully satisfied you?

Recha. I will not say so;—no.

Daya. —yet taken off your keener appetite.

Recha. Well; yes, if you do think so.

Daya. Not I indeed.

Recha. He will be dear to me, nay, always dearer than my life; although his name should not henceforth increase the motion of my pulse, nor this my heart beat higher when I think of him.—But why such chat? Let's hasten to the window, to the prospect of the palm-trees—

Daya. The keener appetite is not quite gone. [*Apart.*

Recha. —where now I may enjoy again the lovely green, not wholly taken up with him.

Daya. That cold may likely prove a new fit of a fever.

Recha. What cold? I am not cold indeed; nor do I see with cold indifference the man whom I may see with more composed mind.

S C E N E IV.

(*Presence-Room in the Palace of SALADIN.*)

SALADIN and SITTAH.

SALADIN (*coming in.*)

BRING here the Jew as soon as he comes. Indeed, he seems to be in no great hurry.

Sittah. Perhaps they missed him.

Saladin. Ah sister! sister! [*Shaking his head and pensive.*
Sittah.

Sittah. If 'twas to take the field, to fight a battle—

Saladin. —and that with arms I never learnt to manage. I must dissemble, raise apprehensions, and lay snares. Where did I learn these things?—And all, my sister, for what purpose?—To fish for money. For money! To trick it from a Jew. For money! Am I reduced to such wretched arts, in order to procure that wretched trifle?

Sittah. No trifle, brother, is neglected with impunity.

Saladin. Alas! too true.—And if that Jew should prove so good and wise a man as you were told?

Sittah. No matter; there is no danger then. The snare is for the stingy, cautious, timorous Jew, not for the man who is good and wise; for such a man is ours without a snare. It will afford you pleasure to behold, how such a man will get the better of the snares; how boldly he will break the strings, and with what subtil caution he will avoid our nets.

Saladin. That's true indeed.

Sittah. And thus there is nothing in the scheme that might perplex you; for is he but a Jew of common mettle, ought you to be ashamed if you appear to him as bad, as he supposes every man to be? Indeed you ought not; for all who shine to him in better light, are fools in his opinion.

Saladin. We must be knaves then, that knaves may not laugh at us a fools.

Sittah. It must be so, if it is knavery to use all things, all men, according to their fitness.

Saladin. Ah! female wit is never at a loss in colouring their errors;—and I do apprehend my hand is too unskilful for that subtil pointed engine.—It wants the cleverness of its inventor: Yet, be it as it may, I dance because you bid me—as well as I can—and should not be ashamed if I danced worse.

Sittah. Not over modest, brother: I warrant you, have but a mind.—'Tis odd, men would persuade us they owe their greatness but to swords and battles. When lions are ashamed to have pursued the fox—the fox is not ashamed of his cunning.

Saladin. 'Tis odd that women should persuade us what they please!—Well go!—I hope I know my lesson.

Sittah.

Sittab. What? Should I go?

Saladin. You do not wish to stay?

Sittab. If not to stay—yet overhear you in that room.

Saladin. To listen? No, sister, if I must perform my part with good success—Be gone! He comes!—and do not stay here! I shall see for you.

[She parts by one door, Nathan comes in at another. Saladin sitting.]

S C E N E V.

SALADIN. NATHAN.

SALADIN.

DRAW nearer, Jew! without concern or fear!
Nathan. May that await and stop your enemies!

Saladin. Your name is Nathan?

Nathan. Yes.

Saladin. The Wife?

Nathan. No.

Saladin. Well! Though you do not take it, yet the people give it you.

Nathan. May be; the people!

Saladin. You do not think I do neglect its voice?—'Tis long since I have wished to know the man whom it has called the Wife.

Nathan. But if it called him so by way of railing? If to be wise implied, in their opinion, no more than prudence, and prudence nothing but a knowledge of one's interest?

Saladin. You mean, I hope, the knowledge of our truest interest?

Nathan. If so, the selfish man would be the prudent, and wise and prudent were the same.

Saladin. You prove, indeed, what you attempt to contradict. — You know the real interest of men, so little understood by men; at least you have strove to know it, have meditated on the subject, and that alone bespeaks the Wife.

Nathan. —which every body thinks himself to be.

H

Saladin.

Saladin. Enough of modesty! and deprecation! 'Tis tedious to indulge that strain, when nothing is expected but plain and common sense (*rising from his sofa.*) Now to our business! but, Jew! deal candidly!—and honestly.

Nathan. I shall serve you well—that I may ever more be honoured with your custom.

Saladin. Serve me? Why?

Nathan. The best goods shall be your's, and at a reasonable price.

Saladin. What talk you? Not of your trade? 'Twill be my sister's business to cheapen goods with you. (That, Madam, is for you (*apart.*) 'Tis not the tradesman I wanted.

Nathan. Then doubtless you desire to hear what information of the enemy I may have happened to pick up on my journey? They stir again. But——

Saladin. I do not want to hear such things from you. I know enough of that. In short——

Nathan. Command me.

Saladin. I want your information on other things—quite other things indeed.—For, as you are so wise a man, pray tell me what religion and what law has best convinced you.

Nathan. I am a Jew.

Saladin. ——and I a Musselman. The Christians are between us.—But one of these religions only can be true.—A man like you, does not stop where birth and accident have placed him; and if he does, 'tis for good reasons, which prompted him to chuse the best. Let's see! and let me hear the reasonings, which to pursue I had no leisure yet.—Those reasonings, which determined you, you may disclose in confidence and freely, that I may be determined likewise.—But why? You start? and measure me from head to foot?—May be, indeed, there never was before a sultan indulging such a whim, which yet does not appear to be below our dignity.—Speak out!—Or do you want a moment to consider of the question?—Well; 'tis granted.—(As to our listener, faith! I must look after her, and hear whether I performed it well.)

A PHILOSOPHIC DRAMA. 51

well.)—Consider then! make haste! I shall not leave you long.
[Goes into Sittah's apartment.]

S C E N E VI.

NATHAN *alone.*

HUM! Hum! 'Tis odd!—I am at a loss indeed.—What means the sultan? What? For money—I am prepared; and he wants—Truth. Truth! He wants to have it down—so ready—so ready down as cash!—Yes, if he wanted good old coin, the scale would set us right; he might receive and I might pay it unconcerned! But Truth is not that modern stamped milled coin, which one tells on the board, and then sweeps off:—and head and purse are widely different.—So pray! who is the Jew? I or the sultan? But why? Should he want more perhaps than Truth?—It would be mean indeed to make a snare of Truth—I cannot indulge that apprehension. It would be mean! too mean!—Too mean? But what's too mean for sultans or for kings?—Indeed it is the case. He blundered out with it in such a hurry! A friend knocks at the door, and asks before he ventures to come in.—I must be cautious!—To be a downright stubborn Jew will not avail;—and to throw off the cloak at once might make it worse; for if no Jew, he would of course perplex me with the question, Why not a Musselman?—Yet this—'Twill do! 'twill save me!—He comes; he may!

S C E N E VII.

SALADIN. NATHAN.

SALADIN.

THE coast is clear then.—I hope 'tis not too early I return? You have considered of the matter?—If so, speak out. No body hears us.

Nathan. Would all the world hear us and attend!

Saladin. So sure is Nathan? That's wisdom faith! to speak with freedom any truth! and for the sake of truth to risk the chance of losing life and fortune.

H 2

Nathan.

Nathan. Yes ! yes ! if that be wanted or of any use.

Saladin. So I may flatter myself, that your advice will make me full deserving of that glorious title, which stiles me *The improver of the world.*

Nathan. A glorious title ! Yet, Sultan, ere I venture on to speak a plainer language, deign to hear a story.

Saladin. Why not ? I am fond of stories, well delivered and well told.

Nathan. I cannot flatter myself as an entertaining relater of tales.

Saladin. Your proud humility again ! Have done !—and tell me what it is ?

Nathan. In days of old there lived in the East a worthy man. He was possessed of a costly ring, he valued higher for the dearest hands that gave it. It was an opal of the finest water, which played off a hundred noble pleasing colours. It had the secret power of endearing him to God and men, who wore it, trusting in its magick charms. No wonder that the Eastern man was never seen without it, nor ever left it from his finger ; no wonder that he should attempt to keep this jewel in his family. He made a will, and left it to the dearest of his sons, prescribing, that the same should leave it to the dearest of his progeny ; that by that clause the most beloved of all future generations should always have it as a legacy, and be the head and master of the family, without respect to birth-right, but by virtue of this wondrous ring.—Pray understand me well !

Saladin. I understand you—So go on.

Nathan. According to that will it went from son to son, down to an happy father of three sons, so like in duty and in love to him, that his paternal heart saw no distinction. Yet did it happen that by turns, now this, now that his dutiful son, was left alone with him. Then, uninfluenced by the other two, his heart could not forbear to look upon that son to be his most beloved, and most deserving of his ring ; and so it happened, that his pious weakness did engage his word and ring to every one of them. But age and death came on apace. 'Twas perplexing for promises were to be kept. The good man could not brook the painful thought

thought that he should disappoint two of his sons, both trusting in his kindness, well deserved. What could be done? Unknown to them he sends an order to a skilful artist, and wants him not to spare expence or trouble, in making to the pattern of his ring two others—to do his best in making them exactly like. The artist far surpassed his expectations. He brings the rings, and lo! not he himself can pitch upon the pattern. With gladness he calls in his sons; to each apart he gives his blessing and his ring—and dies.—You hear me, Sultan?

Saladin (turned aside as if much concerned and surprized.)
I hear you!—But make an end of it!—An end!

Nathan. 'Tis here, for what now follows, follows of itself.—The father was scarce gone, when every holder of a ring pretended to the lordship of the house. They wonder, disagree, debate, examine, scold, and go to law. In vain. They cannot ascertain the authentic ring——
(after a pause, as if he waited for an answer of the Sultan)
——as little as we the authentic faith.

Saladin. Why? Is that to be the answer to my question?——

Nathan. 'Tis only to excuse me, Sir! that I cannot take upon me, plainly to distinguish rings, which he had ordered never should be distinguished.

Saladin. The rings!—Do not play with me!—For those religions, which I did name to you, are plainly different from each other. Even there is dress; there is feasting, fasting.

Nathan. They do not differ in their principles—for is not every one of them established on the ground of history? traditional or written!—And must not history be taken on the word of others? And whose word doubt we less than that of those, who from our infancy convinced us of their kindness?—who never did impose upon us but for our best advantage? Am I to trust my fathers less than you trust your's? Or have I any right to ask you should respect my fathers, and give the lie to your's? And will the same not hold in favour of the Christians?

Saladin (apart.) By the living God! He is right. I am struck dumb.

Nathan.

Nathan. But to our rings again. The brothers went to law; and each of them averred on oath, how he came by his ring, and that he had it from his father's hands. And that was true! That he was promised long before to hold the lordship of the house by virtue of that ring.—And that was true again!—That rather than suspect the word and honour of a worthy father, or rather than to suffer that reproach upon him, though much inclined in favour of their brothers, they must unwillingly suspect them of foul play, attempt to find the traitor, and then take their revenge.

Saladin. But pray the judge? I long to hear what you will make him say.

Nathan. He said, Go for the only evidence, and fetch your father to the bar! You cannot? Then I must dismiss the cause, and you must leave the court! 'Tis not my business to resolve a riddle; or will you stay till any of your rings begins to speak, in order to resolve it?—But stop! I understand the true ring has a secret wonderful power, and by its magic charm endears its owner to the love of God and men. That will decide the question. The false ones cannot operate the same! Therefore be candid! speak! Which is best liked by two of you?—You hold your tongues? The charm works backward? does not exert itself by words and actions? In fact, it works but self-love, for every one of you likes but himself. You are impostors all! and all your rings are false ones. The true ring of your father was lost it seems; and to conceal that loss, he did procure these three instead of one.

Saladin. Ah! excellent indeed! Ah! excellent!

Nathan. Therefore be gone, or hear advice instead of a decision: That is, if every one of you is sure he got his ring from—his father's hands, let every one look on his ring as true and as authentic. 'Tis likely, that your father would not have his family suffer any longer by one tyrannical ring! 'Tis fact, he loved you all alike, and would not, favouring one, disappoint the other two.—Therefore let every one of you indulge his love, disinterested and free from prejudice! vie to show the magick of his ring! and strive to aid its power with meekness, with peaceful disposition, benevolence and hearty confidence

confidence in God! If then the magick of your rings appears to work in favour of your latest progeny, then shall I after thousand times thousand years, not fail to summon them again before this chair. A wiser man sits in it then and hears their plea, and tells them, Children! go! With this advice the modest judge dismissed them.

Saladin. O God! O God!

Nathan. Saladin, if you are that wiser man the judge did promise—

Saladin (*rusthing upon him, and laying bold of his hand.*) I am dust!—I am nothing!—O God!

Nathan. What, Sultan?

Saladin. Ah Nathan! The thousand times thousand years are not yet past.—The judge's chair is not for me.—Go! go!—But be my friend.

Nathan. And is that all? Has Saladin no more commands for Nathan?

Saladin. None.

Nathan. None?

Saladin. None at all—and why?

Nathan. I could have wished to ask a favour.

Saladin. Speak!

Nathan. I am just come home from a journey—from collecting payments due to me.—I am almost overstocked with cash—and times beginning to look dangerous again, I do not know indeed where I can place it safe. I indulged some hopes, that—on account of an impending war, which brings on great expences—you might perhaps have some occasion for part of this encumbering cash.

Saladin (*fixing his eyes upon him.*) Nathan! I will not ask whether Hafi was with you; and not enquire what apprehension might induce you to this wilful offer.—

Nathan. What apprehension?

Saladin. I do deserve it.—I beg your pardon! but I must freely own I was about it, to—

Nathan. —to ask the same?

Saladin. The same!

Nathan. If so, 'twill suit us both!—But 'tis my duty to explain, what induces me to dispose only of a part
of

of my cash in your behalf. 'Tis owing to that templar knight.—You know him.—I stand in debt to him to a large amount.

Saladin. Templar knight! You don't intend, I hope, to support with cash the worst of all the enemies I have?

Nathan. I do not speak of knights templar, but of him you pardoned——

Saladin. Well done! You do remind me of that youth.—I had almost forgot him.—You know him?—Where is he?

Nathan. You do not know then how I do partake the grace you shewed him? At the peril of that life, which you had granted, he saved my daughter from the flames.

Saladin. Has he?—Ha! 'Tis like the man. My brother would have done the same. He does resemble him so much!—Pray! is he still in town? If so, bring him to me! I have so often spoke of this my brother, whom my sister never saw, that she must see his living image!—Go, fetch him!—'Tis wondrous that a single generous action, although the work of accidental passionate impulsion, should be the spring and cause of many others? A most engaging pleasing wondrous chain of providence!—Go, friend, and fetch him!

Nathan (dropping Saladin's hand.) Directly! As to the other business, we are agreed. [Parts.

Saladin. Ah! why did I prevent my sister from over-hearing us?—I fly to her, to tell her, not yet knowing why? [Parts on the other side.

S C E N E VIII.

(The Grove of Palms in the Neighbourhood of the Convent, where the KNIGHT waits for NATHAN.)

K N I G H T.

(Going up and down in deep contemplation, and seemingly in great struggle and anxiety of mind, till he bursts out)

—THERE stops the weary harrassed victim.—
And well! I do not want to search my bosom any more—nor to anticipate the knowledge of what comes

comes hereafter.—Enough, I fled in vain; in vain!—Nor could I more than fly?—Come on what may!—The stroke I did so long attempt to shun, was quick—too quick.—To see her, whom I had no mind to see—to see her, and to be resolved at once no more to leave her—What's resolution? 'Tis intention, 'tis the act. I suffered—I was passive only.—To see her and to feel myself ensnared, was all the same—will ever be the same.—To part with her—to leave her—is a frightful thought—'tis death;—and if there's any thing beyond the line of death, 'tis death.—If that be love, then truly!—the templar knight's in love—then faith! the Christian loves a Jew-girl.—Hum! no matter.—Indeed this blessed country, this promised land, God bless it!—has freed me from so many other whims and errors—that I could——And pray what are the rules of my knight-hood? The templar knight's no more—was dead when Saladin took me a prisoner. This head, (*pointing to his head*) the grant of Saladin, is not my former head.—It is a new one, absolutely ignorant of what they told the templar's head—of duties and of obligations.—'Tis better too, for it suits my country—my paternal country—better, and, since I had it, I begin to think indeed, as formerly my father must have thought, so I was told at least, when on this very ground he fell, where I but risk to stumble.—He fell! 'Tis better faith! to fall with men, than stand with children.—He set the example, which ensures his applause, and whose assent or whose applause carries greater weight with it than his for me?—Ha! Nathan's?—He cannot disapprove it; he gave encouragement and pleasing hopes.—Indeed a wondrous Jew!—so fond of that appearance of a plain and common Jew!—He comes; he comes in haste with cheerful joy; for who came otherwise from Saladin? He! Nathan! He!

SCENE IX.

NATHAN and the KNIGHT.

NATHAN.

WHY? 'tis you?

Knight. You made a long stay with the sultan.
Nathan. Not long. I was detained too long in going; and faith! dear friend! he stands his proof extremely well. His glory, name, and reputation, however great, are but faint shadows of his real virtues. So hear without delay——

Knight. What?

Nathan. He wants to see you—and wants you without loss of time. Attend me for a moment to my home, where a business of Saladin does call me; this done, we go to him.

Knight. I cannot—shall not pass again the threshold of your door——

Nathan. So you did call and see her? Well?—How did you like my Recha?

Knight. Beyond expression! but I shall never see her more—no! never!—unless you give your word that she is mine—for ever mine.

Nathan. How will you have me understand this?

Knight (after some pause, embracing him.) My father!

Nathan. My dear young friend!

Knight. Not son? I beg!—By all the sacred ties of nature I conjure you!—content you, pray! to be a man!—Do not reject me!

Nathan. My dearest, dearest friend!

Knight.——And son?—Not son?—not if a grateful disposition had paved the way to my adventurous love?—not if we wanted but your dear consent?—You do not speak?

Nathan. You do surprize me, knight.

Knight. Do I surprize you, Nathan, with your own thoughts?—Are they to be mistaken now?—I surprize you?——

Nathan.

Nathan. Before you told me who your father Stauffen was!——

Knight. What say you, Nathan?—What?—Do you not in this moment feel any thing beyond curiosity?—

Nathan. For look! I was myself acquainted with one Conrad Stauffen.

Knight. ——And well?—if that had been my father's name?

Nathan. Indeed?

Knight. I have my father's Christian name—for Court is Conrad.

Nathan. But yet my Conrad could not be your father, he was a templar knight like you—was never married.

Knight. However——

Nathan. How?

Knight. However, I may be his son.

Nathan. You laugh—you play with me.

Knight. And you are over nice!—for what?—are there not natural sons—who form no despicable race?—You might dispense indeed with that enquiry into my noble origin and family. I shall not trouble you with such enquiries, for I am far from entertaining any doubt against your pedigree. Forbid it God! You can give proof of it through every kindred, from step to step as far as Abraham; nay, further backward I may trace it, and give my oath upon it.

Nathan. You rail with bitterness—Do I deserve it? Did I refuse you any thing?—Deny you?—No. 'Twas only, not to take you at your word, and not to take advantage of your rashness.—No more than that.

Knight. Indeed!—No more?—Then pardon!——

Nathan. Come! come, my friend!

Knight. Not to your house? No, no; not that. It burns there!——I shall expect you here. If she be mine, I may then see her at my pleasure; if not——I saw too much of her already,——

Nathan. I shall make what dispatch I can.

S C E N E X.

KNIGHT, *and soon after* DAYA,

KNIGHT.

—**T**OO much by far!—The head contains so many thousand things—and yet is now and then too narrow for a trifle!—too narrow!—intolerable!—be the object what it may.—But patience! The ferment will subside, and then bring on again more ease and light and order.—’Tis not my first love; or I have never loved, or do not love at present——

Daya (after having approached sily.) Sir! Sir!

Knight. Who calls? Ha, Daya! you.

Daya. I silyly passed him; but yet he might behold us where we are.—Therefore step nearer behind this tree.

Knight. What is the matter? what secret?

Daya. A secret faith! and two at once. One, only known by me; the other, known by you.—Pray let us change our secrets. Entrust me your’s, and you dispose of mine.

Knight. With all my heart.—So tell me your’s.—

Daya. Ay, ay! Set the example. I follow. For sure you may depend upon it, my secret cannot serve you any ways, unless you do disclose your heart, and trust me first. To pump it out from you by art, or by enquiry, dispenses me from any trust in you. I get at your’s, and I shall keep my secret.—Poor knight! You should indulge that proud conceit to keep a secret safe against a woman’s wit.

Knight. A secret which perhaps we know not of.

Daya. May be. Therefore I must be kind enough to acquaint you with your secret. Pray speak: What meant you by your sudden parting? and that you do not now return with Nathan? Has Recha struck your heart so little?—or so much?—So much! so much! I know the bird by his struggling fluttering on the lime-twig. In short, confess without delay, that you do love her—love her to madness and distraction;—and I may tell you——

Knight.

Knight. To madness? Indeed you are too knowing.

Daya. Owe but your love, I do not insist on madness.

Knight. Because that's understood of course! A temple-knight—and love a Jew-girl!—

Daya. — Seems to be madness—nonsense.—Yet there is often sense in nonsense; nor ought it to be wondered that our Saviour draws us on by means and ways, which otherwise the prudent would avoid.

Knight. That's solemn language.—(Put Providence here in the Saviour's place, and she is right.) You raise my expectations higher than I indulge them.

Daya. O Sir! this is the land of wonders!

Knight. (For all the world crowds here together.) Dear Daya! take for granted that I love her, and that I cannot live without her; that—

Daya. Sure? Sure?—Then give your oath that you intend to honour and to save her—to save her here and for eternity.

Knight. And why? how can I? Can I engage my word or oath for things out of my power?

Daya. 'Tis in your power; and by a single word I put it in your power.

Knight. So that the father would no more dissent?

Daya. What father! Father! He must—

Knight. He must? He is not fallen into the hands of robbers. He must not be compelled.

Daya. —yet must be happy to consent at last.

Knight. —must be happy to consent! Still I may tell you that I touched that string myself.

Daya. Why? and did not he chime in?

Knight. —He did, but with a dissonance which much—disgusted me.

Daya. Impossible! That you should have given a hint of an inclination for our Recha, and he not exulted; retired coolly, and started difficulties!

Knight. Something like it.

Daya. Therefore I will not lose a single moment—

Knight. And yet you do consider of it first?

Daya. Upon the whole he is so good a man!—and I stand much indebted to his goodness! 'Tis a pity he will not hear!—and much against my inclination, that I must force him.

Knight.

Knight. I beseech you, Daya, not to leave me any longer in suspense. But if you are not fully satisfied of the justice of your purpose—be silent, and I am happy to forget you had a secret to conceal.

Daya. That spurs me rather on to speak plain truth. Know then our Recha is no Jew—she is a Christian.

Knight (cold.) No more than that? I wish you joy of it. Well done! Go on to people heaven, since you are past the chance of getting children here below.

Daya. Why, Sir? Does my intelligence deserve your railing and contempt? and do not you rejoice at it? You are a Christian, you are a templar knight, you in love with her? 'Tis astonishing!

Knight. The more so, as she is a Christian of your making.

Daya. If you mistake it thus, I am satisfied—for she is——

Knight. Speak out?—or——

Daya. She is the daughter of Christian parents—and had the blessing of the sacred font.

Knight (in haste.) And Nathan?——

Daya. Is not her father.

Knight. Not her father?—What do you speak?—

Daya. A painful truth, which has cost me many a tear.—No, he is not her father.

Knight. —And nevertheless has educated her as his child? has educated the Christian as a Jewish girl?

Daya. He has.

Knight. She does not know that she was born a Christian? He never told her that she was?

Daya. Never.

Knight. He did not only educate her in that false opinion, but keeps her in it still?

Daya. Alas!

Knight. Why? Could Nathan's wisdom sink so low, and condescend to falsify the voice of nature?—and to divert a heart, which, uncontrouled, unperverted, would have taken another turn?—Daya! indeed you have disclosed to me a secret of importance—and of consequence—which does perplex me—that I know not what I am to do.—I must consider.—So leave me! He may pass by, and may surprize us.

Daya.

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Daya. 'Twould frighten me to death !

Knight. I am too much out of humour to speak with him. So if you see him, you may tell, that likely we may meet at the sultan's.

Daya. But do not reveal my secret.—'Tis only fit to give the finishing stroke—'twas only meant to take away your scruples about Recha.—But, Sir ! if then you carry her to Europe, I hope you will not leave me here behind ?

Knight. Time settles that. But go ! [Part.

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

A C T IV.

SCENE I. (*Cloysters in the Convent.*)

FRIAR, and soon after the KNIGHT.

F R I A R.

YES, yes ! The patriarch is right ! I have scarce ever well succeeded in his commands.—Yet why does he entrust me with such business ? I have no disposition for subtilty and cunning—for such persuasions—for being busy—or for meddling in such business.—Did I retire from worldly concerns, to plague myself with worldly concerns for others ?

Knight (hastily breaking in upon him.) Well met, good friar ! I wanted you.

Friar. Me, worthy Sir ?

Knight. You do not recollect me ?

Friar. Indeed I do ! yet did I not expect to see your honour any more.—I hoped I never should—for God Almighty knows how much I suffered in the painful errand, on which I came to you before, sent by superior orders. God knows I never wished to find you well disposed for my message—he knows how I rejoiced in my honest heart, that you, without delay or hesitation, rejected those proposals, which clash with honour and with knighthood.—But now you come yourself. It has operated !

Knight. You pretend to know why I do want you ?—and for what purpose I do want you ? I am at a loss myself, scarce knowing for what purpose I came hither.

Friar. You have considered of the matter ;—have found that the patriarch is not quite wrong ;—that wealth and honour will reward his scheme ; and that a foe is still an enemy, though he had proved to be our angel more than once. All that you have considered
with

with flesh and blood—and so come on to make a willful tender of your service.—Alas!

Knight. Do not distress yourself, my honest worthy man! 'Tis not for that I come; 'tis not for that I want the patriarch. I am still unaltered and unshaken in my opinion; nor should the world prevail upon me to forfeit your's or that applause, which such a plain and pious man has once bestowed upon me.—'Tis merely to consult the patriarch—

Friar. The patriarch?—A knight consult a priest!—

[*Looking around as fearful.*]

Knight. Yes;—'tis priestly business!

Friar. And yet a priest, whatever be his business, would scorn the advice of knights or gentlemen.

Knight. For priests enjoy the privilege to be wrong, which we indeed are never jealous of.—If 'twas nobody's business but my own, I should not want your patriarch: But there are many things, in which I deem it safer to be wrong with good advice, than to be right and not have asked any.—Moreover, I begin to feel religion is party; however candid and impartial our professions and our turn of mind, we do unknowingly support our party. This being then the case, I fancy 'tis for the best, and I am right—

Friar. I can say nothing—for I do not understand you well.

Knight. And yet!—(But—'tis no decision—'tis advice I want; not learned disquisition, but pure advice!) I thank you, friar, for your hint.—What need of patriarch?—Be you my patriarch! I want the christian.

—The case is this—

Friar. Stop, stop! You do mistake me, Sir.—The knowing secrets brings on many cares; and I am scarce sufficient for that one I took upon me by my vow.—'Tis happy! Hark! and see! There, there he comes himself. Stop in this place; he did observe you.

K

SCENE

S C E N E II.

*The PATRIARCH enters with great ecclesiastical pomp—*with ringing of bells—tail and umbrella bearers—canons—priests—monks—and various attendants, richly and gaily dressed, *The Host carried before him under a canopy, together with all the implements of the Lord's Supper, and the last Unction—that is to say, burning flambeaux—incensories—chalices—little bells—vases—a portable altar—and richly bound books, &c.*

KNIGHT.

WOULD to God I could avoid him!—'Tis not my man!—a ruddy—red-nosed—jolly—cheerful prelate!—and what a gawdy pomp!

Friar. When he goes to court, 'tis quite another thing. He has been visiting a dying Christian.

Knight. It must put Saladin to the blush and shame indeed!

Patriarch (*as he draws nearer, beckons to the Friar.*) Here!—Is that the templar knight? What does he want?

Friar. I do not know.

Patriarch (*advances towards the Knight—Friar and others keep a respectful distance.*) Well Sir!—very glad to see a gentleman so young and gallant!—Ay, ay!—very young indeed!—Well! well! for with God's blessing you have a greater chance to fair preferment.

Knight. Most reverend Sir! I apprehend, but little; my chance is for the worst.

Patriarch. At least I wish with all my heart, that such a godly valiant knight may thrive and prosper for the sake of God and Christendom! nor will he fail to prosper, if with prudent duty he will take the advice of riper years!—But can we do you any service? Ask it!

Knight. Then please your reverend lordship grant advice, still wanting to my younger years.

Patriarch.

Patriarch. With all my heart, in hopes you will take it too.

Knight. Not blindly?

Patriarch. I do not say so;—reason is the gift of God, and we must use it in its proper place.—But must we use and hear it every where? Forbid it God!—As for example's sake, if God should condescend to instruct us by his angels, or any servants of his sacred word—and thus point out our duty, or some method which may in any way serve Christendom, and actually promote the welfare of our holy church: Can any man thus honoured dare to question his commands, and have recourse to reason in order to oppose the sacred will of him, who did create his reason? or to examine by the paltry rules of worldly honour—vain—the eternal laws of heaven?—Enough of that.—But what's the subject, Sir, on which you want our kind advice?

Knight. A supposition, may it please your reverend lordship, that a Jew possessed of an only child, for aught I know a girl, should educate her with the greatest tenderness and care to every virtue—that, as his very soul, he loves this child, and that this child returns his love with pious duty. If now one should be told, this lovely child is not a daughter of the Jew, but was, when in an infant state, picked up, or kidnapp'd, as you please: If further, one was told, she was a Christian girl, who had the blessing of the sacred font, and yet is bred a Jew, not knowing any thing about her parents:—Pray, reverend father, what is one to do in such a singular case?

Patriarch. I shudder at the thought!—But, first, be plain, whether 'tis a fact, or but an idle supposition?

Knight. I thought that in a consultation 'twould make no odds.

Patriarch. No odds? Behold here how the pride of human reason is apt to go astray in spiritual things!—For if the case proposed be but an idle play of wit or fancy, 'tis not worth while to examine into it—it is fit for the schools, to be argued *pro* and *con*. But if it be a fact, which, God forbid! did happen in our diocese, in this our much-beloved seat, Jerusalem:—Yes then—

Knight. What then?

Patriarch. No time is to be lost; the Jew must suffer what penalty the civil and the canon-law have set on such a horrid crime.

Knight. Indeed?

Patriarch. And by these laws, the Jew found guilty of seducing any Christian to apostacy, goes to the stake, to be burnt there alive.

Knight. Indeed?

Patriarch. So much the more that villain of a Jew, who uses force against a Christian's child, in order to withhold it from the covenant of baptism! For is not every thing we do to children force?—except the rites which, for the sake of their salvation, the church performs upon them.

Knight. Yet if this child, without the Jew's assistance, had perished?

Patriarch. No matter! The Jew goes to the stake—for better to have perished here, than to be saved for damnation there.—Moreover, what gave him a right to interfere with God's decrees? God can, when he does chuse, save whom he pleases, without the Jews assistance.

Knight. —and save a soul in spite of any Jew.

Patriarch. No matter, Sir! The Jew goes to the stake.

Knight. I am sorry! and 'tis hard; for people say he did not educate her to his own persuasion, but left her to herself, and did not teach her any thing of God but what plain reason tells and comprehends.

Patriarch. No matter! The Jew goes to the stake!—and does for that alone deserve a threefold punishment!—Why? to let a child grow up without religion? nor teach, the greatest of all duties, faith? 'Tis worse than bad!—And I cannot refrain from wondering, Sir! that—

Knight. Most reverend Sir! as to the rest, we leave that to our next confession. 'Tis fitter to be heard in such a holy place.

Patriarch. Why? not answer me?—not name that villain of a Jew?—not have him safe delivered here?—O! I know better! I will tell the sultan, and, according to his sworn capitulation, he must protect us in whatever rights or dogmas appertain to our religion!

Thank

Thank God!—we have the deed—his hand—his seal. We have it—we! and easily I shall persuade him of the dangers which threaten any state from unbelievers! If people be indulged that way, all social ties are broke.—Away! away! with such an outrage to society!—

Knight. I'm sorry that my time will not permit me to attend with leisure to this excellent sermon: I am ordered to the sultan's.—

Patriarch. Well? Then—sure—then——

Knight. I shall prepare the sultan, if your reverend lordship pleases.

Patriarch. Oh! Oh!—I know—The sultan looks upon you, Sir! with favour and with grace.—So pray remember me with kindness.—The zeal for God alone does prompt me; and if I did exceed the limits any way, I did it for the sake of God.—This you will mind!—and then the case I am sure is—but—a problem? as one might say it is——

Knight. A problem!

[*Parts.*

Patriarch (*shaking his head.*)——which one must enquire into. 'Tis a business for our brother Bonafides.——Here, brother! [*Parts, talking with the Friar.*

S C E N E III.

(*Apartment in the Palace of SALADIN, into which some Slaves carry a Number of Bags, putting them on the Ground in long Rows.*)

SALADIN, and soon after SITTAH.

SALADIN.

INDEED! there is no end of it.—Is more remaining?

A Slave. Near half so much again.

Saladin. Then carry it to Sittah.—And pray where is Al-Hafi? This here, he is to take directly into his custody.—Or might not I transmit it rather to my father? for if we keep it here, it might slip through our fingers.—Yet hard necessity will harden one apace; and he

he must cleverly bestir himself, who means to beggar me again. At least till our Egyptian treasure be safe arrived, the poor may look about for other bounties, and make what shift they can! The only charity I must provide is at the sacred tomb, from whence in conscience no Christian pilgrim ought to part with empty hands!—If that alone —

Sittah (coming in hastily.) And what means that? What for is all that money sent to me?—

Saladin. That you may pay yourself; and if perchance a balance should remain, that you may hoard it up.

Sittah. Is Nathan not arrived with the templar knight?

Saladin. He seeks him every where.

Sittah. Look, brother, what reviewing my old jewels I hit upon.

[She shows him a small picture.]

Saladin. Indeed, my brother! 'Tis him!—Ah! such he was! Poor boy—too soon I lost thee! What wonders would I have performed with thy assistance and example! Pray, *Sittah*, leave this picture in my hands. I know it well. He gave it to your eldest sister, *Lilla*, one morning when she would not let him go. His last it was.—Alas! I let him take his ride alone, and scarce attended! Alas! my *Lilla* died for grief, nor would she pardon me, that I had let him go alone.—We have not seen him since!

Sittah. Poor brother!

Saladin. Pray do comfort yourself!—'Tis our common lot to disappear some time or other!—And—who knows? 'Tis not death alone, that thwarts a youth of highest mettle. He has more enemies; the strongest and the weakest fall alike.—But be that as it may!—I must compare the picture with our templar knight, to see how far my fancy did mislead me.

Sittah. 'Tis for that very purpose that I brought it. But let me see! a female eye must be allowed to be the better judge of manly charms and likenesses.

Saladin (to a porter, who steps in.) Who is there? The knight?—Let him come in!—

Sittah. I leave you, that my presence may not interrupt you, and my attention may not trouble him.

[Sits down on a sofa, which stands sideways, and drops her veil.]

Saladin. Well! well!—(As to his voice I long to hear it! Perhaps it may remind me of Affad's voice, and this be sleeping in my breast.

S C E N E IV.

KNIGHT and SALADIN.

KNIGHT.

YOUR prisoner, Sultan——

Saladin. My prisoner? Should I grant life and not grant liberty?

Knight. What you vouchsafe to grant, I ought to hear, not to suppose. But, Sultan—I cannot thank you for my life, and to express my thanks does not agree with my profession and my character.—At all events you may dispose of it again.

Saladin. Do not dispose of it against myself.—I might with all my heart grant to my enemy his arms—but such a heart—'twould hurt me:—Young gallant man, 'twas no mistake! You are my Affad, life and soul. And look! so strong is the resemblance, that I might ask you where you staid so long? in what a grotto you did sleep? in what a paradise, (Ginnistan) and by what careful fairy's hand this lovely flower was kept so fresh and well preserved? I might remind you of the deeds of arms, which we performed together in many a place; nay, I might scold with you, for those secrets which you kept from me, and for the adventures which I did not share with you.—Indeed, thus I might scold you, if I saw but you, not me.—Well! the only truth of these sweet fancies is, that in my later years another Affad is to bloom again for me—provided you my knight, you will approve of it.

Knight. Whatever you desire my heart desired before.

Saladin. That we may try directly. Would you remain with me? no matter whether Christian or a Musfelman, dressed in a templar's mantle or in our castan, turban or a broad-brimmed felt upon your head, no matter, as you like it best! I never yet found fault that different trees are clad in different barks.

Knight.

Knight. For if you had, you could not be the friendly warrior, who rather would delight in being God Almighty's gardener.

Saladin. If thus you think, we are already half agreed.

Knight. Not half—entirely.

Saladin (*offering his hand.*) A word.

Knight (*shaking hands with him.*) A man!—and thus receive from me more than you could have taken. I am wholly your's!

Saladin. Too much indeed! too great a blessing for one single day!—Did he not come along with you?

Knight. Who?

Saladin. Nathan.

Knight (*very coolly.*) No; I came alone.

Saladin. 'Twas nobly done, my friend! and fortune did direct you wisely that it happened for a man like him.

Knight. Yes, yes!

Saladin. So coldly?—No, young friend! if God works ought of good by us, 'tis wrong to be so cold about it—nay, even modesty forbids that affectation.

Knight. Unhappily each thing has many sides, which often do not seem to fit each other.

Saladin. Then you ought to consider but the best of them, and praise our God; he knows how they agree and fit each other.—But if you are so nice, my friend, I must of course be on my guard with you. I am as every other thing, a thing of many sides, which often do not seem to fit each other.

Knight. It hurts me!—for suspicion is the fault I less indulge than any other——

Saladin. Well, tell me whom you do suspect? It seemed as if 'twas Nathan. Why? suspect that man? and you, you should suspect him? Speak out, and let me have the first proof of your confidence.

Knight. I have nothing against that man. I am angry with myself.

Saladin. For what?

Knight. That once I indulged a dream of a Jew's forgetting that he was a Jew; that waking and with open eyes I dreamt it.

Saladin. Out with your dream!

Knight.

Knight. You have heard of Nathan's daughter. What I did for her, I did—because I had done it. Too proud to gather crops of thanks, where I had not sown for thanks, I refused for many days to see the girl again. Her father was abroad. He came, he heard, he met me; he thanked me, wished his daughter might please me, talked of hopes and happy prospects.—Well; I was persuaded, I went, I saw, and indeed I found a girl—but I am ashamed of it, Sultan!—

Saladin. Ashamed?—that a Jew-girl pleased you? I hope not.

Knight. Ashamed, that by the father's engaging talk misled, my heart was rash! Fool that I was! Once more I rushed into the flames—for now I begged and was refused.

Saladin. Refused?

Knight. The wiseacre of a father does not refuse me flatly; yet he wants to inform himself first, and to consider of the matter. Indeed! Why did not I the same? Why did not I ask questions first, and consider of the matter, when her shrieks pierced through the flames?—Faith! a noble thing it is to be so wise!—

Saladin. Hum! hum! Indulge the old man! His refusal will be over ere long. Will he ask you to turn a Jew?

Knight. Who knows?

Saladin. Who knows?—He who's better acquainted with the man.

Knight. Ah! superstition, in which we were bred, may be thrown off, yet will it still exert its power; and many rail at chains which still they wear.

Saladin. Well said, my friend! but Nathan——

Knight. The worst of superstitions is that which prompts us to look upon our own with complaisance.—

Saladin. May be, my friend! yet Nathan——

Knight. —which fits the weakness of our eye, till used to bear the brighter day of truth——

Saladin. Well! But Nathan! That foible is not Nathan's.

Knight. I thought the same!—yet if this paramount of human virtues should now appear to be no better
L than

than a common Jew, attempting to lay hold of Christian children, that he may bring them up as Jews; what then?

Saladin. Does any body lay that charge against him?

Knight. The girl herself, whom as a bait he threw before me, that he might pay me off with empty hopes for what he will not allow me to have done for her, without a view to gain or lucre: This girl is not his daughter; 'tis a poor kidnapt Christian child ——— strayed or lost.

Saladin. —which nevertheless he would not give you?

Knight (*very warmly.*) No matter whether he would or would not! He is unmasked, this toleration-spouting hypocrite! this Jewish wolf, clad in a philosophic lamb's skin! but I shall know what dogs to set upon him!

Saladin (*gravely.*) Be quiet, Christian!

Knight. Why? why quiet, Christian? If Jews and Musselmans insist on being Jews and Musselmans, why should the Christian be denied to play his Christian part?

Saladin (*still more gravely.*) Be quiet, Christian!

Knight (*more composed.*) I feel the force of the reproach which Saladin expresses in that word! Ah! did I know how Assad would have acted in my place!

Saladin. Not better! —to all appearances full as storming! —But pray who taught you Assad's arts, to bribe me with a single word? —If things are as you told me, I am at a loss indeed how to account for Nathan. —Yet he is my friend, and I would have my friends in peace together. —Take my advice! Be cautious! Do not give him up to your fanatick rabble! Keep secret what your clergy would entreat me to revenge! nor be a Christian in defiance and in spite of Jew and Musselman?

Knight. I had almost come too late! and would have been too late, but for the bloody-minded patriarch I scorned to serve!

Saladin. You went to him before you came to me?

Knight. In a stormy passion and in a whirlwind of suspense! Forgive! I apprehend you will henceforth find less resemblance with your Assad.

Saladin. This very apprehension must have reminded me of him! Methinks I know full well what vices will
create

create our virtues. Nurse these, friend! your vices shall not hurt you in my mind.—But now be gone! Enquire for Nathan as he did for you, and bring him hither. I must set you right.—If you were serious in the courtship of the girl—you might be easy, and leave that to my care; for she is your's! and 'tis but just that Nathan should be punished for his bold attempt to have brought up a Christian child with any meat but pork! Be gone!

[*Knight parts, and Sittah rises from the sofa.*]

S C E N E V.

SALADIN. SITTAH,

SITTAH,

TIS singular!

Saladin. Now, Sittah! was not Assad a gallant handsome youth?

Sittah. If he resembled him, and if the templar knight did not fit to his picture!—But how could you forget to ask him questions about his parents?

Saladin. And chiefly—eh!—about his mother? Whether his mother was ever in this country?

Sittah. A singular conceit!

Saladin. No more than highly possible! for Assad was welcome amongst the Christian fair ones, and so fond of Christian ladies, that once a rumour spread—which—we will drop here. Enough, that I have got him here again! and that with all his faults, and all the whims of his too tender heart, I am resolved to have him here again!—As to the girl, Nathan must give her. What do you think?

Sittah. Give her? He must leave her to him.

Saladin. He must indeed, for as he has no father's claims on her, what can he plead in his behalf? Whoever saved her life in such a manner, succeeds of course to all the rights of him who gave it.

Sittab. Then, Saladin! why would not you take her into our custody, and from the hands of that unjust possessor?

Saladin. Is there any occasion?

Sittab. Occasion?—No.—Yet I, my brother, give you this advice; for I am impatient to know what kind of beauties can affect the hearts of certain men.

Saladin. Well, you may send for her,

Sittab. May I?

Saladin. But spare Nathan! He must not suspect on any account that force is intended to take her from him.

Sittab. Be that my care.

Saladin. And I must go to look about myself for Al-Hafi.

S C E N E VI.

(Hall in NATHAN's House, with a Prospect towards the Palm-grove, as Scene I. Act I. Part of the Goods, mentioned there, appear displayed and opened.)

NATHAN. DAYA,

DAYA.

WHAT magnificence! what choice! Indeed you could not have chosen or given it better. Whence comes that gold-sprig'd silver stuff? what is its price? That's for a bride! A queen could not want it better.

Nathan. For a bride? why for a bride?

Daya. You did not think of it when you bought it. It must be this stuff, no other. 'Tis as if bespoken. The white ground—an image of innocence; and the gold sprigs and branches, which permeate it every where, are not they images of wealth and opulence? How pretty!

Nathan. What are you witting there? and on whose bride-dress do you here display your learning and allegories?—Are you the bride?

Daya.

Daya. I, good Sir?

Nathan. Who then?

Daya. I? ah God!

Nathan. But who's the bride, and on whose bride-dress do you thus expatiate? That all belongs to you.

Daya. To me? is to belong to me?—Is it not intended for Recha?

Nathan. What presents I designed to her, are in another parcel. Make haste and take those things away.

Daya. You mean to bribe me. I would not touch them—no—on no account, if you do not engage on oath to seize this opportunity, which Heaven will not send you twice.

Nathan. —This opportunity? to what?

Daya. Do not dissemble, or affect such ignorance!—In short, the knight is full in love with Recha. Grant her to him. There is an end then to your sin, which longer to conceal is past my power. The girl comes thus to Christendom again; turns what she was before, and what she was when born: And as to you, your goodness, which we never can sufficiently acknowledge, will heap upon your head our candid thanks, instead of burning coals.

Nathan. 'Tis still your common tune, though on another string, which I do fear is neither well in tune nor strong enough.

Daya. How so?

Nathan. I should have no objection to the templar knight; and I could bless him with my Recha rather than another man. But—patience!——

Daya. Patience? Is not that your common tune?

Nathan. But for a few days patience!—look!—who is yonder? A friar? Go, ask him what he wants.

Daya. What can he want?

[*Going to meet and to ask him.*]

Nathan. Pray give!—before he asks it.—(Did I but know how to come at the knight without displaying why I am so curious! for should I tell him my suspicion, and that prove groundless, I must expose the father, and to no purpose.)—What is it?

Daya. He wants to speak with you.

Nathan. Let him step forth; and you be gone.

[*Daya parts.*]

S C E N E VII.

NATHAN. FRIAR,

NATHAN.

(**H**OW happy could I ever be her father!—and cannot I remain so, though I should not have the name?—She will not call me by another; my willingness to wear it, will certainly endear me to her heart.) Be gone (*to Daya*.) What is it you may want, my worthy pious man? [*To the Friar*.]

Friar. Not much.—I'm glad to see you in good health.

Nathan. You know me then?

Friar. Eh! eh! who would not know you? You have pressed your name into so many hands; nay, here in mine it has been recorded many a year.

Nathan (*pulling out his purse*.) Come, Friar, then I must refresh its memory.

Friar. I thank you—I had rather not—'twould be robbing poorer people—I shall not take it. But please to give me leave to remind you of my name, and to refresh your memory; for I can boast that I put into your hands a jewel of great value.

Nathan. Forgive it, friend!—I am ashamed.—But tell what was it?—and as a forfeit take tenfold the price.

Friar. Hear first how but to-day I came to be reminded of this jewel which I pledged to you.

Nathan. A jewel pledged to me?

Friar. 'Tis not long since I lived at Quarantana, as an hermit, in the neighbourhood of Jericho; when lo! Arabian robbers broke down my chapel and my cell. They dragged me along. I made my escape, and fled to the patriarch hither to petition for another place, where in solitude I might pray to God till my happy dissolution.

Nathan. I am on coals, good Friar. Be short. The jewel which you left with me!

Friar. You shall hear of it, Nathan.—Well; the patriarch promised me an hermitage on Tabor, as soon as vacant, and ordered me till then to stay here in the

convent

convent as a lay-brother. And there I am, Nathan; and with I was on Tabor; for the patriarch puts me on many things which I abhor. For example:—

Nathan. Pray, friend, have done.

Friar. 'Twill come directly!—Somebody had whispered to him this day, that there must be here a Jew, who educates a Christian child as his daughter.

Nathan (concerned.) How?

Friar. Hear but the end of it!—He ordered me to find out this Jew, and was in violent passion on that account, because he looked upon it to be the very sin against the Holy Ghost—that is to say, that sin, which, in our estimation, is worse than any other, though, God be praised for it! we do not understand well what it is. He ordered me, and his loud passion did at once awake my conscience; for I remembered, that I might myself have been the cause of that great sin, which cannot be pardoned.—Tell me: Did not about eighteen years ago a groom deliver to you a female child, then very young?—

Nathan. How so?—Indeed he did——

Friar. Eh? Nathan, pray look sharp at me. That groom am I.

Nathan. You?

Friar. The gentleman from whom I brought this child, was, if I'm not mistaken, one Baron Filneck—Wolf Filneck.

Nathan. Right!

Friar. The mother had died a few years before; and as the father was soon after forced suddenly to retire to—Gaza, I think—whither the poor little thing could not follow—he sent it to you; and did not I meet you with it at Daroon?

Nathan. You did.

Friar. No wonder if my memory should fail me. I have served so many gallant masters, and this last but for too short a time. Soon after he fell near Ascalon, was upon the whole a good sort of a man.

Nathan. He was indeed! I am much beholden to him! More than once he has rescued me from the sword!

Friar. If so, I hope you will have taken proper care his helpless child.

Nathan. You may be sure of that.

Friar. But pray! where is she? I hope not dead?—
I hope alive?—Provided other people do not know of
it, there is no harm.

Nathan. No harm? no apprehension?

Friar. Faith, Nathan, none; for mark how I judge
of the matter. If something bad borders on the good
I mean to do, I have it rather left it undone, and cau-
tiously refrain; for we are pretty well acquainted with
every thing that's bad and hurtful, but we are very far
from being equally acquainted with the chances of the
good we mean.—'Twas very natural, that, if this Chris-
tian child should really enjoy the advantage of your love
and education, that you should bring her up as your
own daughter.—Suppose you did so with due love
and full affection, are you to blame for it, and to be
punished for your love?—I cannot force myself to
believe it. 'Twould have been prudent faith! and
wiser, had you entrusted her to other hands, and brought
her up in Christian tenets: But in that case you must
have been deficient in duty to your friend, and to his
child deficient in love.—And infants stand, at such an
early period of life, in greater need of loving fostering
care, than of religious tenets, and of the Christian
creed—they look and grasp about for a streaming
breast of wolves and lions, rather than for the school-
master's talk. To make them Christian scholars, there
is time enough. If the girl be but healthy, and grown
a good child under the inspection of your loving eye,
she is, in the eyes of God, the same she was before.
And is not our religion established on the same which
you profess? It has given me great offence, nay, cost
me many a tear, that Christians would sometimes for-
get our Lord himself was born a Jew.

Nathan. Good brother! you must speak for me, if
fanatics and hatred, and hypocrisy should rise against
me—for a thing—ah! for a thing!—which you alone
shall hear!—But take it with you to your grave! No
vanity has prompted me to speak of it to any body. To
you alone I shall reveal it.—'Tis to your simple piety I
tell it; for that alone does understand how far a pious
friend of God and men will go.

Friar.

Friar. You are affected, and your eye does overflow?

Nathan. You met me with the child at Daroon; yet do not know perhaps, but a few days before that time the Christians had massacred all the Jews at Gath, their wives and their children all; nor do you know, I think, my wife and seven hopeful boys were amongst the slain: they had fled to my brother's house, and every one was burnt.

Friar. Just God!

Nathan. When you arrived, I had for three long days and nights lain prostrate on the ground, in dust and ashes, and cried to God for pity and for vengeance—by turns upbraiding him, and raving I detested my existence, and dealt my malediction on this world, and swore to Christendom eternal hatred.——

Friar. Alas! I do believe you!

Nathan. But by and by my reason did return; with gentle voice it spoke;—"There's a God! and even what befel you was by his decree! Well! come, and put in practice what you knew so long before, and what to do is full as easy as to understand it, if you will. "Arise!"—I did arise! and cried to God, "I will; assist me with thy sacred will!"—Just at that moment you alighted from your horse, and made a tender of the child wrapt in your mantle.—What intercourse we had that time, what fell from you, from me, I have forgot; but do remember well I took the child, and I put her on my bed, and kissed her, sobbing out with tears, "Thanks be to God! who sends me one again for seven!"

Friar. Nathan! Nathan! you are a Christian!—By Heaven you are a Christian! A better never was.

Nathan. Let us rejoice; for what in your opinion makes you a Christian, makes you a Jew in mine!—But let's have done with melting into tender sentiments, when strength of mind is wanting!—Although love and affection with sevenfold strings bound me to this dear helpless child; although the very thought is death, that I must lose with her again my poor seven boys—if Providence demands her from my hands—I must submit, and will obey!——

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Friar.

Friar. That's all!—Even that I did not know how to advise you! Your guardian angel and your heart advised it before!

Nathan. Yet every one must not presume to rob me of my child.

Friar. Not every one indeed!

Nathan. Whoever has no better claims on her than what I have myself, must have them of an older date.—

Friar. No doubt.

Nathan. —by nature and by blood——

Friar. That's my opinion.

Nathan. Therefore I beg, do name the man, who as a brother, uncle, or a cousin, is related to her; I shall deliver her to him—and not deny her, who was born and bred an ornament to every house and every religion. I hope you know more of your master and of his family than ever I did know.

Friar. Hardly!—I told you that I lived a short time only with him.

Nathan. Do not you know then who the mother was?—Was not she of the Stowffen family?

Friar. May be. I think so.

Nathan. Was not her brother one Conrad Stowffen, a templar knight?

Friar. If I am not mistaken he was.—But stop! I recollect to have a book of my late master's. I took it from his bosom, when we buried him near Ascalon.

Nathan. Well.

Friar. 'Tis a prayer-book, what we call a Breviary.—I thought it might be of some use to other Christians, though not to me, who cannot read my prayers.

Nathan. No matter!—but go on.

Friar. And I have been told, the names of her family and of his are in it, in my master's own writing.

Nathan. O happy! happy! Go fetch the book. Make haste. I am ready to buy it at any price, and shall be thankful for it. Make haste!

Friar. With all my heart: But what he wrote in it, I am told is in Arabick characters. [Parts.

Nathan. No matter! Go fetch it! Could it enable me to keep this lovely child with me, to buy with her

her this son-in-law!—'Tis hardly to be hoped!—
But, be it as it may, who can possibly have spoken of it
to the patriarch? I must not forget to ask—Why should
Daya have forget herself so much?

S C E N E VIII.

DAYA. NATHAN.

DAYA (in great haste and concern.)

HA! Nathan! think——
Nathan. Well?

Daya. It frightened her so much! A message from——

Nathan. ——from the Patriarch?——

Daya. No—from the sultan's sister, princess Sittah——

Nathan. Not from the patriarch?

Daya. No!—Do not you hear me then? Princess
Sittah sent for her, and wants her up to court.

Nathan. Whom? My Recha? and Sittah sends for
her!—If Sittah sent, and not the patriarch——

Daya. Why do you think of him?

Nathan. Did not you lately hear of him? Did not
you? And did not you give him some hint?

Daya. I?——to him?

Nathan. But where are the servants?

Daya. In the hall.

Nathan. 'Tis prudent to speak to them myself. Come!
I apprehend the patriarch is at the bottom. [*Parts.*

Daya. And I—I have some other apprehension. I
would lay any thing——the only daughter of so rich a
Jew would suit a Musselman: and all the hopes of our
knight are blasted, if venturing a second step I do not
tell our Recha who she is by birth!—I shall, as soon as
left with her alone—perhaps just when I go with her
to court. The hint can't hurt her. Yes! yes! and
now or never. [*Parts.*

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

S C E N E I.

(*An Apartment in the Sultan's Palace, as Scene III. Act IV. The Gold Bags still in a corner.*)

SALADIN, and soon after some RENEGADOES.

SALADIN (*stepping in.*)

THE money is there still! No body knows of the dervis; for aught I know, he may have stumbled on some chess-board, and there forgot himself—Why should not he forget his master?—But patience! What's the matter?

Renegado. Good news, my lord! Great joy, my Sultan! Kahira's caravan arrives—is safe arrived with the seven years tribute of the opulent Nile.

Saladin. Bravo Ibrahim! You carry a welcome message!—Ha! at last! at last!—Thanks for your news.

Renegado (tarrying.) (Well! out with it!)

Saladin. What do you wait for?—You have my leave to go.

Renegado. I do not wait for any thing, but for—

Saladin. —Your welcome? you had it; and for what else?

Renegado. Not for some present for the welcome message?—If thus—I'm faith the first whom Saladin did learn to pay with words.—And faith! 'tis glorious too to be the first, to whom he proved a prudent miser.

Saladin. There, you take a purse.

Renegado. Not now; nay, even if you offered me the whole.

Saladin. The fellow's obstinate!—defies me!—Well, take two.—Indeed he goes! nay more—is nobler than I was to him—for sure 'tis harder such a man should refuse, than I should offer presents.—He! Ibrahim!—

But

But how could I at my exit from this world attempt to be a different man? Will Saladin not die like Saladin? If so, he should not have lived like Saladin.

Another, or second Renegado. Now, Sultan!——

Saladin. If you come to tell me——

Second Renegado. That the transports from Egypt did arrive——

Saladin. I know it already.

Second Renegado. I came too late then!

Saladin. And why too late? There——take a purse, or two.

Second Renegado. Makes three.

Saladin. Yes, as you are an accomptant! You take them.

Second Renegado. A third must come indeed—if ever he arrives.

Saladin. How? why?

Second Renegado. He may have broke his neck! for when we heard the transports were arrived safe, three of us made what haste we could. The first—he stumbled; and so I got the start till we got to town; yet if our Ibrahim does know it better——

Saladin. But what became of him who stumbled?—Pray fly to him, to meet him!

Second Renegado. That I shall do apace!—and if he lives, half of these purses is his. [Parts.]

Saladin. Look what a noble second fellow this!——And who can boast of such a set of renegadoes? Might I not be allowed to think, that my example formed them?—Away all thoughts of using them in any other manner—and of attempting at the end of life another course!

A third Renegado. Sultan——

Saladin. Is't you who stumbled?

Third Renegado. Not me. I come to tell you only—that Emir Manfor, who led on the caravan, does just alight——

Saladin. Go fetch him!—But there he is.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

—EMIR MANSOR. SALADIN.

SALADIN.

Welcome, my Mansor!—How do you do?—But Mansor, Mansor, you made us wait too long!

Mansor. This letter will explain to you what instructions Abulcassim had to quell in Upper Egypt, before we dared to venture on our march, which since I have forced as expeditiously as possible.

Saladin. I do believe you!—But Mansor, take without delay a new escort, for you must march again, and see the greater part of these supplies safe to my father on mount Libanon.

Mansor. With all my heart.

Saladin. Let your convoy be strong enough. It is not safe about the mountains. You may have heard already, that the templar knights are out again. Take care!—Where is the caravan? I will go and see it, and assist your orders.—And you!—*(to his attendants)* I shall from thence call at my sister's.

S C E N E III.

(The Palms before NATHAN's House, under which the KNIGHT walks up and down.)

KNIGHT.

TIS fix'd, I won't walk in.—He will at last, I hope, make his appearance!—Ha! formerly they watched me, looked out for me, saw, met me without delay—with readiness!—There comes a time, perhaps, when he'll desire me not to be so much about his door.—Hum! 'tis odd.—Why do I fret so much? and pray, what has inflamed me thus against him?—He said, “I do not yet refuse you any thing;” and Saladin engages to humour him.—Why? Should I prove a Chris-
tian

tian more inveterate than he's a Jew?—It may lie deeper here!—"Tis hard to know one's self; for why should I indulge that envious jealousy about the prey he is so anxious to take from Christendom?—A prey indeed! but not a small one such a creature!—A creature? Yes! not of the slave, who launched the block on the shore of life, and left it floating there; but rather of the artist, who in that block conceived the godly form, which he cut out!—Ah! Recha's father is the Jew, and not the Christian who begot her.—If she was but a Christian girl, stript of the accomplishments which such a Jew could give her—speak loud, my heart—what could engage thee? 'Tis nothing! little! Her smiles, were they but a sweet convulsive motion of her muscles, and was the feeling without charms, which smiles on her lips—her smiles could not engage me!—Ah faith! I saw them oft as pleasing thrown away on nonsense, trifles, flatterers, and libertines! Did they engage me then? Did they betray me to a fond desire of fluttering away my life in such a pleasing sun-shine?—I do not know indeed—and yet I fret, and do indulge my whims against the man to whom she stands indebted for these charms?—How?—Why?—Could I deserve the raillery which Saladin uttered when he left me! 'Tis bad enough that he should think it! How little I must appear to him! how mean!—and all that for a girl?—"Twill not do indeed. Let's turn about! the more as Daya may have told me stories!—But look! he comes engaged in conversation!—Ha! with him?—with my Friar?—Ha! then he knows it all! is betrayed to the patriarch!—And all that mischief came from me!—Alas! that but one single spark of this unlucky passion should catch so suddenly, and blow up all our brains!—Without delay let's now resolve! I wait till the Friar may have left him. [Stands off.]

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

NATHAN. FRIAR.

*NATHAN (coming on.)***H**AVE thanks again, good Friar!*Friar.* And you have mine.*Nathan.* Your thanks? for what? that I was obstinate to force upon you what you do not want?—All would be well, had you, less obstinate, received it; and did you not persist in being richer than myself.*Friar.* The book did not belong to me; it was the daughter's; the only fortune which her father left her.—Well, well! she may depend upon you—and you, please God, will not repent of all you did for her.*Nathan.* How could I? Never.*Friar.* Well! The patriarch and the templar knights—*Nathan.* —Cannot hurt me so much, that I should repent of any thing—and less of that!—And pray, are you sure 'tis a templar knight who does inflame the patriarch?—*Friar.* It can be no other. 'Twas a templar knight who spoke to him just now; and what I overheard makes me believe it.*Nathan.* Yet there is but one templar knight now at Jerusalem, and with that I am well acquainted. He is my friend; a young, a noble, frank and open-hearted man!*Friar.* Just so—'tis him!—yet, if I'm not mistaken, appearance and men's hearts will often widely differ.*Nathan.* Alas!—whoever be the man, let him indulge his malice! I do not care, for with your book I do defy it all, and go streight to the sultan.*Friar.* Success to you, and I shall leave you.*Nathan.* And have not seen her?—I beg you would come soon and often.—'Twould be well indeed, if of those matters the patriarch did not hear to-day!—But why? You may tell him what you please without restraint.*Friar.*

A PHILOSOPHIC DRAMA. 89

Friar. Not I. Farewel.

[*Parts.*

Nathan. Do not forget us, brother!—Ah God! I might here in the streets kneel down and thank thee, that all this complication of apprehensions, and of doubtful dangers, unravels as a clew!—I feel quite easy, that henceforth I have nothing to conceal before the world!—that henceforth I may so freely walk before my fellow-creatures as before thine eyes, who needest not judge of men by actions, which seldom are their choice.

S C E N E V.

NATHAN and the KNIGHT, who meets him.

K N I G H T.

STOP, Nathan, stop—I want you.

Nathan. Who calls? Is't you? Where was you, that I did not meet you at the sultan's?

Knight. We have missed each other. Forgive it.

Nathan. I shall; but Saladin—

Knight. You were just gone—

Nathan. And you did see him? If so—all's well.

Knight. But he wants to see us both together.

Nathan. The better. Let's go. I went to him.

Knight. But might I ask you who that man was?

Nathan. Do not you know him?

Knight. Was not he the goodly honest friar, so often sent on dirty errands by the patriarch?

Nathan. May be!—He does belong to him indeed.

Knight. 'Tis clever, faith! that villainy should send simplicity before.

Nathan. —if stupid and if dull;—but pious—

Knight. No patriarch has any notion of that virtue.

Nathan. I warrant you that man. He won't assist the patriarch's bad designs.

Knight. At least he seems to dislike them—Yet has he not told you any thing about me?

Nathan. Of you?—He did not speak of you by name—nor does he seem to know your name.

Knight. Perhaps he may not.

N

Nathan.

Nathan. He spoke of a templar-knight, no doubt.

Knight. And what?

Nathan. What, to be sure, he could not say of you.

Knight. Who knows? Let's hear.

Nathan. That a knight informed against me at the patriarch's.——

Knight. Informed against you?—Then, Sir, he told a lie.—And hear me, Nathan! I am not the man who would or could unsay one single word. What I did I won't deny! Nor am I, on the other hand, the man, who would with stubborn pride support the justice of my wrongs. Why should I be ashamed of them? Am I not willing to make amends? Do not I know what fair confession and acknowledgments will operate?—You must hear me, Nathan! I am the friar's templar knight, whom he called an informer. 'Tis me. You know what turned my head, what made the blood boil in my veins! A fool I came, to throw my life and soul into your arms;—and you received me with such coolness—so lukewarm—for that is worse than cold:—with measured steps you did avoid me—with queries you attempted to evade me—in short, even now it puts me out of humour, and I must not think of it.—But hear me, Nathan!—thus boiling, Daya haunted me, and let me know her secret, which seemed to account for your behaviour.

Nathan. How so?

Knight. But hear me!—I fancied that you would not lose again to any Christian what once and silyly you had rescued from the Christians hands;—and thus I thought 'twas well, 'twas wondrous well, to cut your throat at once.

Nathan. At once? 'Twas well?—Where is the goodness of that fine conceit?

Knight. But hear me, Nathan!—Upon my word I was not right!—for after all you may be innocent.—That foolish woman, Daya, talks, not knowing what.—She hates you—wants you in a scrape.—All that may be!—May be indeed!—And I am but a youngster, a green raw mad-cap, who raves into extremes—exceeding all the bounds of reason and of prudence by overdoing,

doing, or by doing nothing.—And that may be!—Forgive me, Nathan.

Nathan. Thus you fall upon me——

Knight. In short, I hastened to the patriarch!—but did not name you. That's a lie! I mentioned the case in general terms, to hear what he would say of it.—Wherefore? 'Twas wrong, for I knew the patriarch to be a villain. I should have questioned you about the matter; not have exposed the innocent creature to the danger of losing such a father.—But yet there is no harm. The prelate's villainy, all of one piece, consistent ever, did instantly restore me to my senses.—For—hear me, Nathan! hear the end of it—for even if he knew your name, what would it matter?—He can but take the girl out of your hands—he can but drag her to the convent from your house.—Therefore—give me the girl! and he may try. Ha! I shall defy him to take away my wife.—Give me the girl; give her; make haste!—whether your daughter or not!—whether Jewess, Christian, or neither!—no matter what! I shall never ask you questions about it, either now or hereafter. Be that as it may!

Nathan. Do you suppose, then, that I want to keep it secret?

Knight. Be that as it may! no matter.

Nathan. I have not denied to you, or any other person concerned about it, that she is a Christian, and that she is no more than my ward.—But why I did not tell it to her sooner, wants to be accounted for to her alone.

Knight. Not even that.—Save her the trouble of the discovery! and do indulge her filial piety!—Till now she depends on you alone.—So give her! Pray, Nathan, give the girl to me!—'Tis I alone, who may—who shall—save her a second time to you and to herself.

Nathan. You might have saved her! you might!—'Tis now too late,

Knight. Too late?——

Nathan. Thanks to the patriarch——

Knight. To the patriarch?—Thanks? For what?—Would he have thanks from us?—For what?

Nathan. That now we are acquainted with her family;

mily ;—that now we know who are the persons to whom she ought to be delivered up.

Knight. Then he may thank the prelate—who shall be more obliged to him hereafter.

Nathan. To this her family you must apply—'tis from their hands you must expect her—not from mine.

Knight. Poor Recha ! poor child ! what accidents ! The happiness of other orphans proves thy misfortune ! Pray, Nathan ! and where is her family ?—where her relations ?——

Nathan. Where ?

Knight. And who are they ?

Nathan. Her brother has been found—to him you must apply.

Knight. A brother ?—Who is he ?—a soldier, or a clergyman ?—Let me hear it : 'Twill decide my hopes.

Nathan. I do not believe him to be a soldier, or a clergyman. He may be both at once. I am not yet fully acquainted with him.

Knight. Moreover ?

Nathan. He is a gallant man ! with whom our Recha will be well enough.

Knight. Yet a Christian ?—I am sometimes at a loss what to think of you.—Forgive me, Nathan !—Must she not, amongst Christians, play a Christian's part ?—Must she not, by playing it, become a Christian ?—And must not the wheat, you sowed, at length be stifled by the weeds ?—And yet, with unconcern you say—with great concern I hear it—that with her brother she will be well enough ?

Nathan. I think so, and I hope it.—And after all, she has still you and me to depend upon.

Knight. She must be happy with him, faith ! The dear beloved brother will undoubtedly supply his dear beloved sister with food and raiment, with sweat-meats, toys, and dresses. What can she want besides ?—To be sure, a husband, if I am not mistaken !—Well, well ! the dear beloved brother will provide her—as he may ! The more Christian-like the better !—Ah ! Nathan, Nathan ! you had formed an angel, which others will destroy.

Nathan.

Nathan. No danger! She will keep herself worthy our affection.

Knight. Don't say so! Don't speak at least of my affectionate love! It wants full possession—it wants her all, not lessened of any thing, not even of a name!—But stop!—Does not she suspect already what they are about?

Nathan. She may—yet whence should she suspect it?

Knight. No matter; she shall—she must in either case hear first from me what fate awaits her.—My notion, not to see her sooner than I may call her mine, drops to the ground. I go——

Nathan. Stop! where are you going?

Knight. To her—to try whether her delicate female mind is strong enough for the only resolution her dignity demands.

Nathan. What resolution?

Knight. No more to care for you and for her brother.——

Nathan. And?

Knight. And to follow me;—though that might throw her into a Musselman's arms.

Nathan. Stop!—you do not find her. She is with Sittah, the sultan's sister,

Knight. Since when? and why?

Nathan. And if you have a mind to see her brother there—let's go.

Knight. The brother? Sittah's or Recha's?

Nathan. Perhaps both. Come, come! Pray follow me. [He leads him off.]

S C E N E VI.

SITTAH's Harem, or Apartments.

SITTAH and RECHA in full Conversation.

SITTAH.

INDEED, my love, you make me happy!—But why so anxious? so fearful and so shy?—Be cheerful! talk away, my dear.

Recha.

Recha. May it please your highness——

Sittah. What highness? No, my love; call me thy Sittah—friend—and sister—and if you please, your mother!—Indeed, the difference of our ages will warrant you to give, and me to have that endearing name.—So young!—so wise!—so pious!—Your knowledge and your learning speaks your reading.

Recha. My reading?—Ha! ha!—My Sittah means to laugh at her foolish little sister. I scarce can read.

Sittah. Scarce read! you little liar!

Recha. A little of my father's hand-writing, that's all! I thought you spoke of reading books.

Sittah. I did.

Recha. Then I must tell you fairly, that I hardly understand to read in books!——

Sittah. Are you serious?

Recha. I am indeed. My father has so little fondness for cold books, which stamp but dead impressions on the mind.

Sittah. Ay child! ay! what you say—may be right forsooth!—And the many things you know——

Recha. I know from what I heard him say—nay, I might tell you too how? where and why? he taught me this and that.

Sittah. Indeed!—it will of course stick better to the mind, and all its faculties are thus instructed at once.

Recha. And I am fully convinced you read but little.

Sittah. How so?—I am not proud for having read. But why? Your reasons, child? Speak out.

Recha. You are so plain—so artless—so much yourself.

Sittah. Well?

Recha. —and books are said to make one otherwise. At least my father told it.

Sittah. Ah! what a wondrous man your father!

Recha. Is not he?

Sittah. How well he hits the mark!

Recha. Does not he?—(with great concern)—and yet this father——

Sittah. What ails you, my love?——

Recha. This father——

Sittah. Why? you weep?

Recha.

Recha. —And this father—Ah! I must out with it!—my heart would burst.—

[*Overpowered by tears, she falls on her knees.*]

Sittah. My child! my *Recha*! Pray what ails you?

Recha. This father I shall lose!

Sittah. You? lose him? Why? Compose yourself. —Never!—Rise!

Recha. You shall not have offered in vain to be my friend and sister!

Sittah. I am your friend and sister! For God's sake rise—or I must call assistance.

Recha (*composing herself, and rising.*) Ah! pardon.—My sorrow and my pain made me forget your wisdom, and your goodness. Despairing sighs will not avail with *Sittah*. Calm reason will direct her judgment!

Sittah. Well then?

Recha. No, my friend, my sister, will not permit that! will not permit that another father be forced upon me.

Sittah. Another father? forced upon you? My love! who could, who would attempt it?

Recha. Who? My *Daya*—ah! so good to me! so cruel! will attempt—will do it.—You do not know, perhaps, who this my *Daya* is? Well! God will forgive her!—will reward her!—She has done so many good—so many bad services to me!

Sittah. So many bad ones?—She cannot have been good to you indeed.

Recha. Ah! very good indeed.

Sittah. Who is she?

Recha. A Christian lady, who brought me up with such a tender care—with so much goodness, that you do not conceive—and that I never missed a mother!—God will reward her!—Yet she has frightened, tortured, plagued me ———

Sittah. For what? and why?

Recha. Ah! poor woman!—I told you—she is a Christian; plagues me out of charity;—is one of those fanatics, who ween to know the general, only way to God!

Sittah. I understand you now!

Recha.

Recha. —and feel themselves driven by the ghost, to show the way to those who miss it.—Nor is it almost possible they should do otherwise. For if there be but one strait way to heaven, how can they see with unconcern their friends on others, which lead them to perdition—to perdition for eternity? or love and hatred must be all the same, and be consistent.—Nor is it that which makes me complain. I might have patiently submitted to her sighs, her prayers and her threats—nay, willingly—for they produced reflections, and good and useful thoughts; and 'tis flattering too to stand so high in one's affection, that he cannot bear the thoughts of eternal separation.

Sittah. Ah very true!

Recha. But that—that is too much! I have nothing to oppose it with—not patience or wisdom—nothing!

Sittah. What pray?

Recha. What just now she pretends to have revealed to me.

Sittah. Revealed? and even now?

Recha. This moment! when going hither we came by the ruins of a Christian church. At once she stopped—seemed in great agitation; and threw her eyes in tears, by turns on me, by turns on heaven. At last she said, “Come, let us through this temple the shortest way!” She went. I followed, and my eyes wandered through the awful tottering ruins. She stopped again; we found ourselves on the sunken steps of an altar in decay. I shuddered, and I cannot express the horrors which I felt, when all in tears, with folded hands, she fell upon her knees before me.——

Sittah. Good child!——

Recha. —and by the godly faint, which in this sacred place may formerly have heard so many fervent prayers, and wrought so many wonders, she conjured me—did conjure me with all the expression of truest pity, to have pity of myself!—at least to pardon her, that she must tell me how and why I am bound to the Christian church.

Sittah. (Poor child!—I guess!)

Recha. —that I was born of Christian blood;—that I was christened;—that I am not Nathan's daughter
nor

—nor that he is my father!—Ah God! He not my father?—Sittah! Sittah! behold me here again.

[Falls prostrate on her knees.

Sittah. No, no! Arise.—My brother comes! Arise!

S C E N E VII.

SALADIN, and the same.

SALADIN.

WHAT's here, Sittah?

Sittah. Ah God! she is quite overcome.

Saladin. Who is she?

Sittah. You know——

Saladin. Our Nathan's daughter? What is it?

Sittah. My love, compose yourself!—The sultan——

Recha (*dragging herself on her knees before the sultan, with her head bent to the ground.*) I do not rise, nor will I see the sultan's face, nor shall I wondering behold upon his brow the rays of justice and of mercy——if——

Saladin. Arise.

Recha. ——if he does not promise——

Saladin. Come!—I promise—whatever it be.

Recha. ——nor more nor less than what will grant me to my father, and him to me!—I do not know yet who besides may plead a father's claims—or may presume upon them; nor do I care. But pray! do these paternal rights and claims depend on nothing but on blood? on blood alone?

Saladin (*raising her from the ground.*) I guess!—But who could cruelly distract you with such apprehensions? Is there any occasion for them? or any proof to go upon?

Recha. There may be! for Daya pretends to have it from my nurse.

Saladin. Your nurse!

Recha. Who dying, felt herself obliged to tell it.

O

Saladin.

Saladin. Even dying! why not when delirious?—Even if true! the blood alone is far from giving full paternal rights and claims! makes scarce the father of a brute! and gives at most a right to deserve a father's name!—Do not fret!—and hear me, child: If two pretended fathers should disagree about you—let them alone—and chuse a third by your free consent!—chuse me!

Sittah. Pray, child! Ah do it!

Saladin. I will prove a kind indulgent father! But stop—there is something better!—After all, what need of fathers? They may chance to die? Look about you for a younger friend in time, that may bid fair to live his life along with you! Do not you know of any yet?

Sittah. Do not make her blush!

Saladin. Indeed I shall and will; for blushes improve the plain one's, and sit still better on the fair one's face.—I have ordered hither your father, Nathan, and—some other person too. You guess?—Hither I ordered them. I hope you give me leave, my Sittah?

Sittah. Dear brother!

Saladin. And mind it well, sweet miss; do not forget to blush before him!

Sittah. Before whom? to blush?

Saladin. You little hypocrite!—well! faint, if you please and can! (*A servant-slave comes to Sittah.*) They are not yet come.

Sittah (to the slave.) Well. Let them come in.—They are arrived!

SCENE VIII. *and last.*

NATHAN, KNIGHT, *and the same.*

SALADIN.

Welcome, my dearest friends!—To you, my Nathan, I must declare, that now, as soon as you please, you have your money back.

Nathan.

Nathan. Sultan! —

Saladin. 'Tis now my turn to serve you. —

Nathan. Sultan! —

Saladin. The caravan is safe arrived. I am now so rich again, as I have not been a long while past. — Come, tell me what you want for some great speculation! for even you, as other merchants, you cannot have too much of cash!

Nathan. — And why would you, my lord, speak of this trifle before all other things? — Ah! yonder I behold an eye in tears; I wish to have it dried first. (*Going towards Recha.*) You wept? What for? — Are not you my dearest daughter still?

Recha. My Father! —

Nathan. We understand us. Enough! — Be happy! be composed! and so you may, provided your heart be still your own, and be not threatened by some other loss! — Your father is safe, nor is he lost to you.

Recha. I apprehend no other loss.

Knight. No other loss? — Well! then I was mistaken. A subject lost with unconcern was never desirable. — Well! well! — Nathan! that changes all! — Saladin! we came here by your orders. I had missed you. Do not give you any trouble.

Saladin. Too rash again, young friend! Can you expect that every wish should meet you? — that every mind should guess you? —

Knight. You heard—you saw it, Sultan!

Saladin. Indeed I did! — 'tis bad enough! You were not surer of your hopes!

Knight. But now I am.

Saladin. That proud command of gratitude recalls all obligation. What you rescued from the flames did not become your property; for else the robber, who hurries into fire and flames, would be as honourable as you!

(*Advancing towards Recha, in order to conduct her to the Knight.*)

Come you, my dear! Be not too nice with him. Were he another man, less warm and proud, he would not have saved you from the flames. You must—you will

will make fair allowance.—Come! put him to the blush! do *you* what properly *he* should have done! Own your affection and your love; make a tender of yourself!—and if he can refuse you, and ever can forget how much more kindness *you* did show him by *this* step, than *he* did show to you by *his*—(which after all exposed him to the mighty dangers of some smoke and fumigation!)—then faith! he is unlike my brother Assad—has but his mask, and not his heart. Come, come, my love—

Sittah. Go, go, my love! 'tis little for your gratitude, 'tis nothing.

Nathan. Stop, Saladin! Stop, Sittah!

Saladin. You too?

Nathan. There's still somebody who has something to say—

Saladin. Who would deny it? No doubt, my Nathan! A friend, like you, ought to be heard!—and first of all—You see I am acquainted with the whole.

Nathan. Not quite!—I do not speak of myself. 'Tis somebody else, whom Saladin should first of all hear on the subject.

Saladin. Who?

Nathan. Her brother.

Saladin. Is't Recha's brother?

Nathan. Yes!

Recha. My brother? Have I a brother then?

Knight (*starting, as from a wild and dumb distraction.*) Where? where is this brother? Not here yet? I was told I should see him here.

Nathan. Patience! you will be satisfied.

Knight (*with great bitterness.*) He saddled a father upon her: Could not he pick up a brother too?

Saladin. But that was wanting still!—Ha Christian! such a mean suspicion could never have disgraced my Assad's lips.—Well! go on that way!—

Nathan. Forgive him!—I readily forgive him.—Who knows what, in his place and years, we might have thought ourselves! (*Friendly and frankly advancing*) 'Twas nature, knight!—Suspicion follows diffidence. Had you directly pleased to tell me your true name—

Knight. Why?

Nathan. You are not of the Stowffen family.

- Knight.* Of what then, pray ?
Nathan. Nor is your name that which you told me.
Knight. What is it then ?
Nathan. Your name is Lew of Fillneck.
Knight. Why ?
Nathan. You seem astonished, and you start ?
Knight. And justly ! Who dares to say that ?
Nathan. I dare, and I may tell you more ; yet am I far from accusing you of falsehood.
Knight (angry.) Did not you give me here the lie ?
Nathan. You may have likewise a claim and right unto that other name.
Knight. I have ! God bid him say so !
Nathan. —for your mother was of the Stowffen family. Her brother and your uncle brought you up in Germany, when your parents fled that harder climate, returning hither. His name was *Curt of Stowffen*. He may perhaps have given you his name, and have adopted you !—Is't long since you came over with him ? I hope he is still in life ?
Knight. What can I say ? Ah Nathan ! you have said the thing. He is no more. We came but with the last detachment of our order.—But—pray !—what has all that to do with Recha's brother ?
Nathan. Your father——
Knight. Why ? Did you know him likewise ?
Nathan. He was my friend.
Knight. Your friend ? Is't possible, Nathan——
Nathan. His name was Wolf of Fillneck ; he was no German.
Knight. And even that you know ?
Nathan. Had only married a German lady ; had followed her to Germany for a short time only——
Knight. No more ! I beg.—But Recha's brother ?
Nathan. Are you ?
Knight. Her brother I ?
Recha. My brother ! eh ?
Sittah. Relations !
Saladin. Relations both !
Recha (advancing.) Ah brother !——
Knight (stepping backward.) Your brother !——

Recha.

Recha (stops; to Nathan.) It cannot be!—His heart denies me!—We are impostors! God!

Saladin (to the Knight.) Impostors? why? what do you think? what can you dare to think? If there is imposture any where, 'tis with you alone! for all is imposition.—Your face, your voice, your gait! 'tis none of your's! Not to acknowledge such a sister! Go!

Knight (approaching with great humility.) Ah Sultan! do not misunderstand the effect of my surprize and my astonishment! Do not mistake me and your Affad in a situation in which perhaps you never saw your brother! —*(To Nathan.)* You take and give with liberal hands.—Indeed you give more than you took from me! *(Embracing Recha)* Ah sister! dearest sister!

Nathan. Bland of Fillneck is her name.

Knight. Bland? Bland?—Not Recha? no more your Recha? God! you deny her, and call her by her Christian name again!—You may deny her, 'tis no matter.—Ah Nathan, Nathan! why must she suffer for all this?

Nathan. And what?—my children!—for the brother of my daughter is my child as soon as he pleases! *(During the time Nathan embraces them, Saladin goes with astonishment to his sister.)*

Saladin. What say you, Sister?

Sittah. 'Tis affecting.

Saladin. And I—I shudder almost at the idea of a more affecting scene. Prepare.

Sittah. Why?

Saladin. Nathan, a word! *(During the time Nathan approaches, Sittah advances towards the Knight and his sister, in order to share their joy. Nathan and Saladin speak low.)* Hear! hear me, Nathan! Did you tell me before—that?

Nathan. What?

Saladin. Her father was not from Germany—was not a native from that country. Who was he, pray?—Where was he born?

Nathan. He never would let me know it; nor do I know of it from him.

Saladin. Nor was he otherwise a Frank?

Nathan.

Nathan. O! that he would own with frankness.—
Persian was his favourite language.——

Saladin. Persian? Persian? I want no more—"Tis
him! 'twas him!

Nathan. Who?

Saladin. My brother! my Affad! there is no doubt.

Nathan. Well, as you think of it yourselves—please
then to take the proof of it here in this book!

[*Delivering the prayer-book.*

Saladin (*opening it with great avidity.*) 'Tis his writing!
and that I recollect!

Nathan. They do not know yet any thing of it! 'Tis
still depending on your will what they are to know!

Saladin (*still turning over the leaves.*) I not acknowledge
my brother's progeny?—my nephews—not my grandchildren?
not I? Leave them to you perhaps?
(*Louder*) Ah Sittah! they are both our brother's children!

[*He rushes into their embraces.*

Sittah (*following.*) What do I hear?—it could not
have been otherwise indeed!

Saladin (*to the Knight.*) Now, friend! in spite of all
your stubbornness, you cannot help to love me!—(*To
Recha.*) And whether you say ay or no, I am now become
your father.

Sittah. And I your mother!

Saladin (*to the Knight again.*)—My son! my Affad!
and my Affad's son!

Knight. I of your blood!—Indeed there was some
truth then in the stories which they told me when
a child.

[*Falling upon his knees.*

Saladin. Look! look! the rogue! He knew of it,
and might have fallen by my hands! I shall punish him
for it!

[*During their reciprocal embraces,
the curtain drops.*

E N D.

Mother. O! that he would own with language—
Teresa was his favorite language—
Teresa. Teresa? Teresa? I want no more—The
Mother. Who?
Teresa. My brother! my Anna! there is no doubt
Teresa. Well, as you think of your mother—
then to take the proof of it here in this book!
Teresa. (pointing to the book) This is the
fact! and that I recollect!
Mother. They do not know yet any thing of it! The
fact depending on your will what they are to know!
Teresa. (And turning to the Mother) I yet know
ledge my brother's property!—my nephew—not my
granddaughter! not I! I leave them to your judgment!
(Teresa) Ah Sister! they are both our brother's child—
The mother and the father
died!
Sister. (Sister) What do I hear!—it could not
have been otherwise indeed!
Teresa. (to the Mother) Now, Sister! in spite of all
your enthusiasm, you cannot help to have me—(To
Kara). And whether you say or no, I am now be-
come your father.
Sister. And I your mother!
Teresa. (to the Mother) —My son! my Anna!
and my Anna's son!
Kara. I of your blood!—Indeed there was some
truth then in the book! If they told me when
a child.
Teresa. Look! look! the rogue! He knew of it,
and might have taken by my hand! I shall punish him
for it!
[During their repeated exclamations,
the curtain drops.]

